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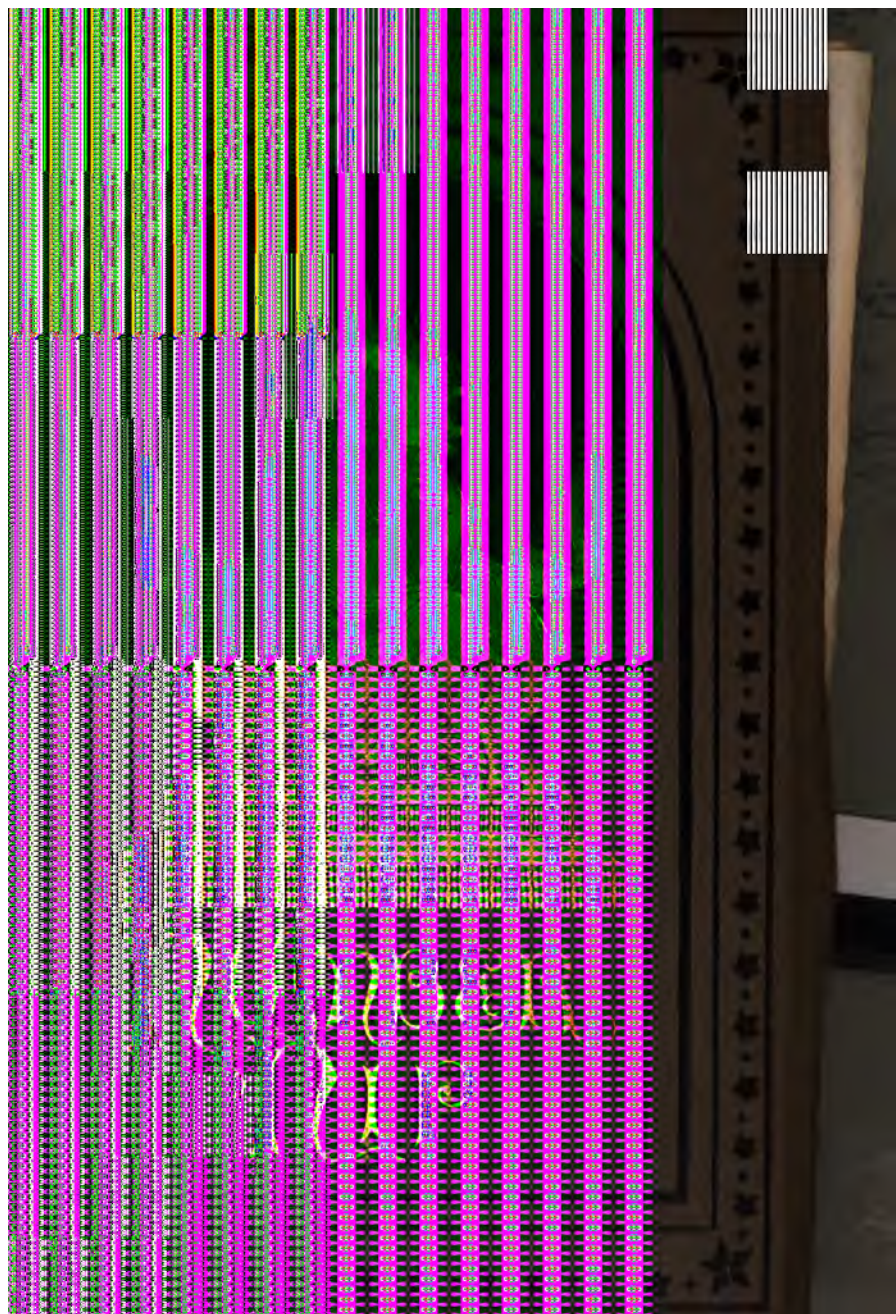
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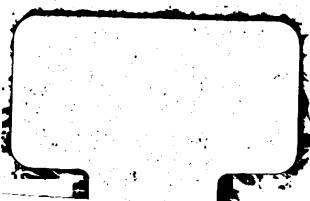
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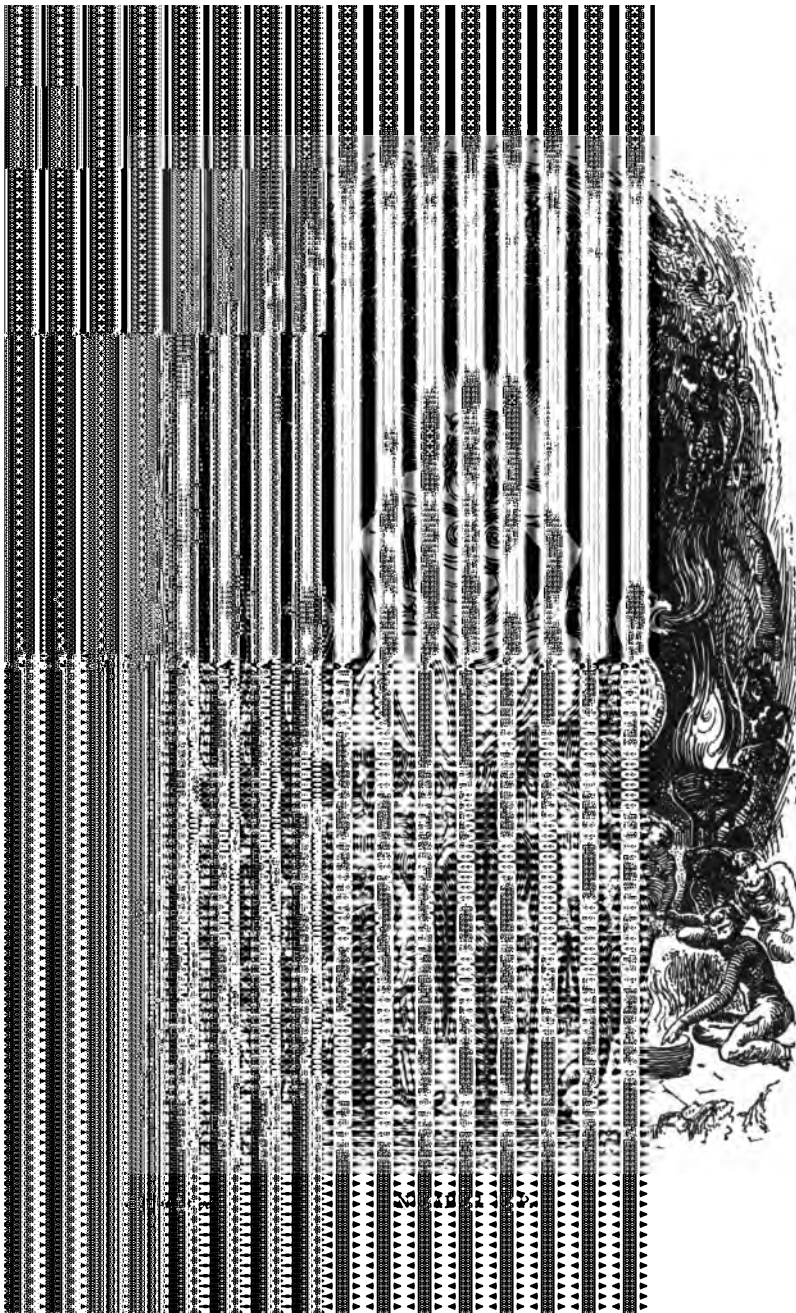






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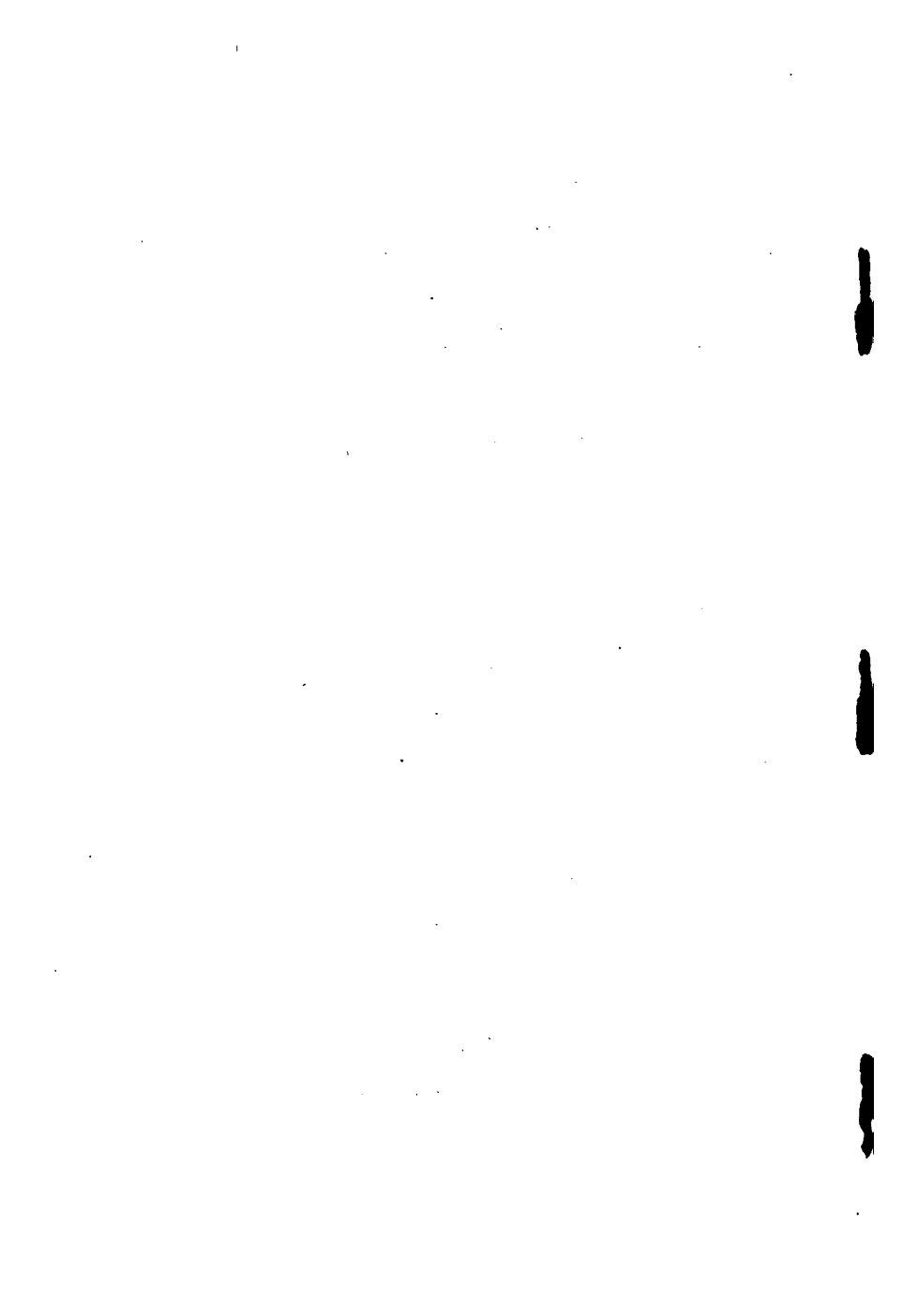
STORIES ABOUT NUMBER NIP



ORIES

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PREFACE.

THERE are many stories about the wonderful doings of Number Nip, the legendary Spirit of the Giant Mountains in Silesia. These were first collected by Musæus, the famous German tale-writer, towards the end of last century, and they were published by him in his well-known book of "Popular Tales." Ever since then the Stories of Number Nip have been a source of endless enjoyment to both old and young in Germany.

The first translation of them into English was published in the year 1790,—three years after the death of Musæus; but that translation was badly done, and it created little popular interest. About fifty years ago three of the Stories—very pleasantly written—appeared in an anonymous book of interesting tales, named the "Odd Volume." In 1845 Mr. William Hazlitt published five of them, along with some others of Musæus's best tales, in one of the volumes of the

"Holiday Library." Twenty years later Mr. Mark Lemon re-wrote the same five stories—compiled, as he mentions in his preface, from the early translation. All these versions, except that of 1790, have much literary merit, and they well deserve popularity. None of them, however, are suited for children; and it occurred to me, while reading the stories to my own little people, that if they were re-written in a simple style, and somewhat altered in general tone, they would form a delightful addition to our juvenile libraries. I have accordingly done my best to recast those that follow in this way; and I trust that my young readers will find some amusement in them for their winter evenings, as well as some of those good lessons which none of us can learn too soon or too well.

I have taken some liberties with parts of the original narrative, and also with certain features of Number Nip's character; but I trust that the stories as so altered will be found all the better suited for their intended purpose.

WALTER GRAHAME.

NOVEMBER 1880.

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they get too low, keeping them down when they get too high, and making openings for them through great volcanoes to let them out, when they blaze up so fiercely that they threaten to burst the earth asunder.

Number Nip is busy too—busier even than any of his dwarfs and fire spirits. He sits on his high throne in the centre of the earth making laws and ruling his kingdom ; and he has always beside him the cleverest of the dwarfs and the wisest of the fire spirits as his ministers to help him. He has many thousands of swift messengers, too ; and they are for ever flying in all directions, either carrying his orders to the busy workers in every part of his great kingdom, or bringing back messages that he may know how the work of his kingdom is going on.

But Number Nip has a little sunny kingdom on the outside of the earth besides his great dark kingdom below. That little kingdom is the Giant Mountain Land in Silesia. Number Nip is not the only King of that land. A great Emperor is king there as well as he ; but Number Nip does many strange and wonderful things amongst the

mountains which the great Emperor, with all his power and grandeur, cannot do.

Number Nip goes to the Giant Mountains now and again for a holiday, because he likes to enjoy the pleasant sunshine for a time, and to see all that goes on in the world above, and to amuse himself in many an odd way.

He sometimes amuses himself by doing mischievous things, and sometimes by doing kind things. He sometimes punishes bad people, and sometimes does good to good people. He sometimes shows a very angry temper, and sometimes a very frolicsome temper. People are always afraid of meeting him, because they never know whether he will treat them well or ill ; and when one happens to meet a man or a woman, or a horse, or a cow, or any other living thing about the Giant Mountains, he cannot be sure that it is not Number Nip, as Number Nip is constantly changing himself, now into one shape and now into another.

When Number Nip used to come up first to the outside of the earth, there were no people in the world at all ; but there were

plenty of wild beasts, and he liked to amuse himself in the Giant Mountains with the wild beasts. Sometimes he was very good to them, and would lead them to pleasant places, where they got very nice food. At other times he would frighten them terribly, and make them rush headlong in crowds over great high rocks, or plunge into dark deep water-holes. But Number Nip got tired playing with wild beasts in the Giant Mountains, and then he went down to his kingdom below, and did not come back to the Giant Mountains for many thousands of years.

At last he got weary of the darkness, and wished to see the sun again, and the beasts and the birds, and all the beauty of the Giant Mountains ; and so he came back to the world for a holiday. But what was his surprise when, looking down from the top of one of the mountains into the valleys below, he saw not wild beasts and birds only, but crowds of men and women and little children for the first time. He watched the men and women working at all kinds of work, and the children playing on the flowery meadows

and under the shade of wide-spreading trees. Much of the wild forest-land had been cleared of its old woods, and fields of rich corn grew where the woods had been. There were many meadows, too, of fresh green grass with hundreds of cattle feeding on them, while flocks of sheep and goats wandered quietly among the mountains. There were also many villages of thatched cottages scattered through the valleys, and Number Nip saw the bright blue smoke curling up from them in all directions through the trees ; and he saw a great house, much larger than any of the others, in one of the valleys near the foot of the mountains. That great house he soon knew was the king's palace.

Number Nip was not angry when he saw the men and the women and the children, and the flocks and herds among his mountains, because he thought the valleys looked very much better than they did when there were only wild beasts in them. After looking about for a while, he said to himself, " I will go down into the valleys amongst these men and women and children, and see what like they are, and how they behave to each other."

So Number Nip went down into the valleys; and when he did so, he took the form of a stout young country lad, and said to the people he met that his name was Fritz, and that he wanted to hire himself to a farmer. As Fritz looked so stout and fit for farm work, he soon found a farmer who was glad to hire him, and who said he would give him good wages if he would help well at the farm. Fritz worked so hard that he did nearly all the farm work himself, and he did it much better than anybody had ever done before. When the farmer saw this he grew lazy, and did not care to work himself. He spent the money badly, too, which he got for the good crops that Fritz made to grow, and he would scarcely give Fritz food to eat. When Fritz saw this he said to himself, "My master, the farmer, is a lazy, selfish, bad man; I won't serve him any more." So Fritz left the farmer; and after he left him everything went to wreck and ruin at the farm.

Number Nip, who was of course no longer Fritz after he had left the farmer, now changed himself into a shepherd, and called himself Franz. He then went to a sheep-farmer who

had flocks of sheep and goats feeding on the hill-sides, and asked if he wanted a shepherd. "Yes," said the sheep-farmer; "but I want a bold fellow, who will save my sheep and goats from the wolves; for the wolves make sad havoc among them, and my shepherds and dogs get frightened and run away. I will give you good wages if you will watch my flocks properly." Franz said he would do his best. So he became shepherd to the sheep-farmer. He was shepherd to him a whole year, and all that time he watched the flocks so well, that the wolves had not taken so much as a lamb or a kid, and not a sheep had been stolen. The flocks, too, had always been driven to the parts of the mountains where the grass was best; and both goats and sheep became fat and beautiful to look at. No accident had happened to any of them; so that at the end of the year there was not a sheep or a goat, or a lamb or a kid amissing. The sheep-farmer was, of course, well pleased when he saw that his flocks had been so carefully watched; but he was not well pleased when Franz asked him for his wages. The sheep-farmer was a very greedy

man, and never liked to pay money to anybody ; and he did not want to give money to Franz. So the night after Franz asked for his wages, the sheep-farmer went out in the dark, and stole one of his own sheep from the fold, and killed it and hid it. When Franz came next morning and asked again for his wages, the sheep-farmer said to him in a great rage, "There is one of my sheep amissing. You have either lost it or stolen it, and you shall have no wages." Franz then left the sheep-farmer ; and it was not long before the sheep-farmer lost the half of his sheep and goats. Many were devoured by wolves, many were stolen, many fell over precipices, and others were starved from want of being driven to the good pastures. The greedy sheep-farmer was then sorry that he had not paid Franz his wages, and kept him as his shepherd.

After Number Nip left the sheep-farmer he was no longer Franz, and he changed himself into a well-dressed young lad, such as judges used to have for their servants ; and he went to a Judge, and called himself Jan, and asked the Judge if he would

take him for his servant. The Judge liked the look of the lad, and said, "Yes." So Jan became the Judge's servant, and served him for a year. All that time he did his work well—just as well as he had done it to the farmers. He did his very best to help to punish thieves and rogues of all kinds, and to save from punishment innocent people who had been wrongly blamed. But the Judge was not a just Judge ; and for all that Jan could do to help him he was always doing wrong—punishing people who did not deserve to be punished, and letting people who deserved to be punished escape. Jan did not like that, and he told the Judge he could not be his servant any longer. The Judge was angry with Jan, and ordered his officers to seize him and to put him in prison. So the officers seized Jan and put him in prison, with chains on his wrists and ankles ; but Jan was no sooner in prison than he threw off his chains, and escaped from his prison-cell through the keyhole.

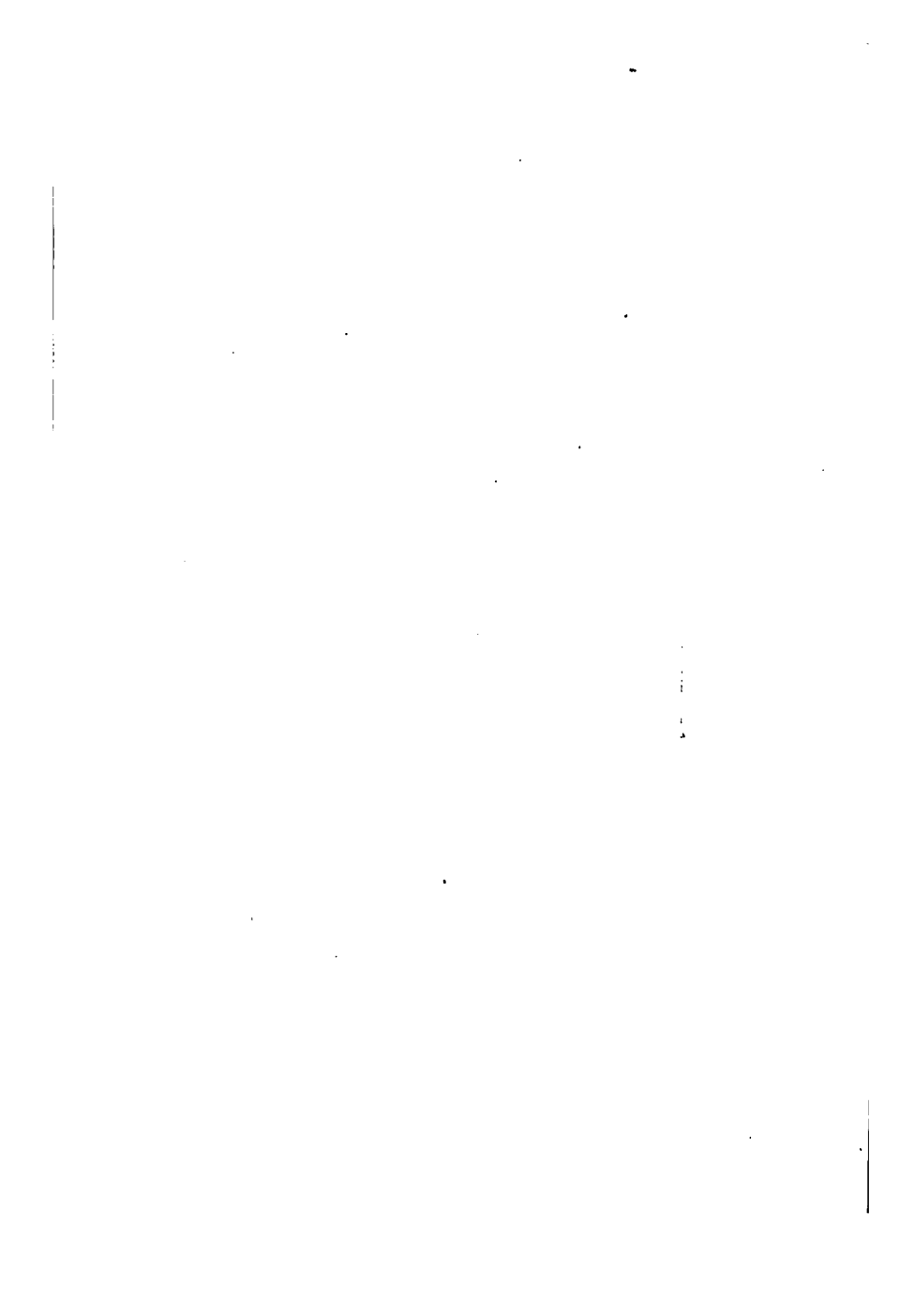
When Number Nip was out of prison he was, of course, no longer Jan ; and he went up to the mountains and sat down on the top

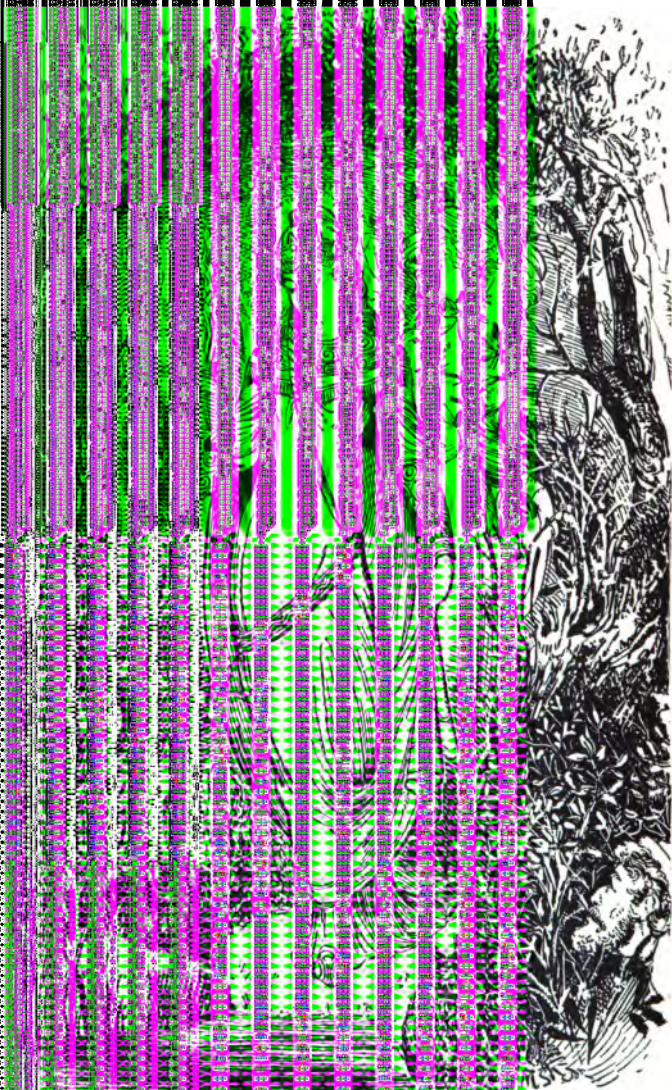
10 NUMBER NIP IN THE MOUNTAINS.

of a great high rock. From his seat on the rock he saw the valleys below with all the people in them, working or amusing themselves as he had seen them at first; but he now knew something more about people than he knew at first. He said to himself, "Men are cheats and rogues, and behave badly to each other. I am ashamed to have them in my Giant Mountain valleys. I wonder that good Mother Earth gives them all those kindly crops of corn and fruits that grow for them. But I will see more of them yet; I will go down into the valleys again."

So Number Nip went down into the valleys again, and watched the people. He was always going about amongst them—sometimes making himself known at once to the man or woman he chanced to meet, but often disguising himself so that he should not be known. Number Nip had many strange adventures while he went about in that way; and I am now to tell you some of those adventures.









II.

THE PRINCESS.



NE day Number Nip hid himself among some bushes, that he might see the people who passed, and know how they behaved. There was a dashing waterfall near the place where Number Nip lay hid, and there was a clear crystal pool below it, all shaded about with wide-branching trees. A very beautiful lady came with her maidens to this pool soon after Number Nip had gone into his hiding-place. She was a Princess, the daughter of the King of Silesia, whose palace Number Nip had seen from the top of the hill. She often came out to the woods to gather sweet-smelling flowers and wild strawberries for her

father, the King, who was very fond of sweet-smelling flowers and wild strawberries. In the warm days, when she was in the woods, she liked to bathe in the crystal pool at the waterfall; and when Number Nip saw her, she was going to the pool to bathe. Number Nip was charmed with the beauty and grace of the Princess, and he said to himself, "I must see her better than I can in this thick bush." So he changed himself into a raven, and flew up and perched on a branch of one of the trees which was beside the pool. But now that he was a raven, he began to see like a raven, and to feel like a raven; and he liked better to watch a nest of field mice, which he thought would be a dainty supper for him, than to look at the Princess. But as he really wished to admire the Princess then much more than field mice, or anything else that he had seen, he thought it would be best that he should change himself into a young Prince, so that he might be able to see like a young Prince and feel like a young Prince. He then flew back into the bush, and made himself into a beautiful handsome young Prince; and he had no sooner become

a young Prince than he saw the Princess in all her beauty, and admired her more than any other living creature. Of course, he never looked at the field mice again, and he now thought nothing about his supper.

After the Princess and her maidens had finished their bathing, they took up their baskets of sweet-scented flowers and wild strawberries, and went home to the palace. Number Nip looked after the Princess with anxious loving eyes as long as she was in sight; but he wished to see her again when she should come back to the fountain, so he said to himself, "I will not leave this place until I see her once more;" and he remained at the fountain, watching day and night for her coming. She did not come for many days. But although Number Nip was looking anxiously for her every day, he was not idle all that time, as you will see when I tell you a little more of what soon happened.

At last the Princess did come back with her maidens, and Number Nip was delighted beyond measure when he saw her. But he did not remain hid in a bush this time at the fountain.

When the Princess and her maidens came to the fountain, they were astonished more than I can tell by what they saw. The rough dark rocks which the water used to dash over into the pool below were no longer to be seen, but in place of them beautiful white marble steps, rising one above another like a stair. The water did not now dash down in a roaring fall, but fell gently over the marble steps in pretty cascades, which glittered in the sun as his rays shone on them through the leafy branches. The pool below the fall, in which the Princess used to bathe, was changed into a large round marble basin, and from the middle of the basin a fountain spouted up high in the air, and watered with the glittering drops which fell from it the green grassy banks of the basin, and the trees and shrubs which grew around. Daisies, violets, forget-me-nots, and many other flowers of the most lovely colours appeared like beautiful gems amongst the grass, while roses, jasmines, and honeysuckles grew up amongst the shrubs. But the most wonderful thing of all which the Princess and her maidens saw was a cave or grotto which opened up in

the marble rock behind the cascade. The Princess went forward to look at it, and, although she was at first afraid to enter it, she at last took courage and did go in. It was very beautiful, and she looked about to see all its beauty. Its roof and walls glittered with a frosty sparkling whiteness, while many rich gems, which were studded over every part of the roof and the walls, showed all the colours of the rainbow as the rays of the sun fell on them through the pure foaming water of the pretty cascade. When the Princess entered the grotto, she saw some very tempting fruit set out on a white marble table, as if intended for her. She tasted it, and found it more delicious than any fruit she had ever tasted before. She then came out of the grotto and looked at the marble basin with the clear cool water in it. There were many white shining pebbles scattered over the bottom of the basin, and she saw from these pebbles that it was not too deep for her. So, with the help of her maidens, she undressed and went in; but she was no sooner in than she began to sink. When her maidens saw her sinking, they rushed forward and tried to

seize her to drag her out, but before they could reach her she had quite disappeared, and nothing was to be seen in the bottom of the basin but the white shining pebbles as before. The Princess's favourite maiden, Brinhilda, leaped into the basin after her, as she wished to sink too, and follow her mistress; but when Brinhilda got into the water, she found that she could not sink, and she floated on the surface like a cork.

The maidens were in the greatest sorrow at the loss of their mistress. They waited at the side of the marble basin, not knowing what to think or to do, but always hoping to see her again. After waiting many hours, they began to fear that the King might be wondering what had become of the Princess, and they left the basin and walked towards the palace. Before they got to the palace they met the King, who had just come from a meeting of his great lords, with his golden crown on his head. When he saw the maidens coming without the Princess, and looking very sorrowful, he feared that something sad had happened to the Princess. So he hastened to meet the maidens, and anxiously asked

them what had become of the Princess. The maidens looked away from the King and could scarcely speak, but at last the favourite maiden Brinhilda told the King the whole story. The King in great grief threw off his royal robe, dashed his crown from his head, and hid his face in his hands, weeping bitterly. He then asked the maidens to show him the place where the sad accident had happened, and they led him to the place. When they had got there, however, no marble basin, or fountain, or cascade falling gently over marble steps, or beautiful grotto glittering in the sunbeams was to be seen. The maidens were greatly astonished, and they were much vexed too, thinking that the King might not believe their story; but the King just said, "Many strange things have happened among the Giant Mountains before this time, and this sad and strange thing will be explained to us some day, and all may yet be well with our Princess." When the King had said that, he went back silently and sorrowfully to the palace, and the maidens followed him in silence and sorrow too.

When the Princess had fallen through the

bottom of the marble basin, she found herself in complete darkness; but she felt two arms immediately seize her, and hurry her through a long passage under the ground. She was, as you may suppose, in great terror, and while she was in the dark passage she fainted, and knew nothing about how she got out of it. When she awoke up from the faint, she saw that she was in a large beautiful room, like a very large drawing-room very grandly furnished. She was lying on a couch which she felt soft and downy; and she was dressed in rich rose-coloured satin with a bright blue sash round her waist; and there was a handsome young man dressed like a Prince, kneeling on a cushion on the floor in front of the couch, watching her very lovingly. She wondered where she was, and who that young man could be. He soon told her the whole story about himself. He said that he was King of the dark world below, which he ruled from his throne in the centre of the earth, and that he sometimes came up to the Giant Mountains to see what was going on in the world above. He also told her about the

two bad farmers, and the bad judge, and how bad he thought all men must be. He then told her how beautiful he thought she was when he first saw her, how much he loved her, and that he wished her to marry him, and be his Queen in his palace among the Giant Mountains. He then showed her all the beautiful rooms in his palace, and all the rich and lovely things which he had got ready for her. After she had seen everything inside the palace, he took her out to his garden, and showed her through all its beauties. He showed her flowers of the richest and most delicate colours, the sweet scent of which filled the air. He showed her hundreds of beautiful birds which always sat singing on the trees; and he led her into pleasant walks, which were always cool, under the shade of widespreading sycamores, with their great masses of green leaves. Delicious golden apples loaded the trees in the orchard. There was a great park too, with herds of deer in it, and it was so great that the Princess could not see the outside of it in any way she looked. The palace and garden and park were much larger and grander

than the palace and garden and park of the Princess's father. The Princess thought she had known all the beautiful places among the Giant Mountains, and she wondered much that she had never seen or even heard of this grand place.

Number Nip was very kind and attentive to the Princess, and did everything he could to please her and to make her happy, hoping that she would in time consent to be his Queen ; but the more he tried to please her with all kinds of nice and beautiful things, the more sad and unhappy she became. When he saw this he thought it might be the want of companions like herself that made her so sad and unhappy. He then said to himself, "Bees and birds and all sorts of animals like to crowd together, and perhaps women like to be with other women. I will get other women to be companions to the Princess, and perhaps, when they amuse her and cheer her, she will learn to love me." He then seized a garden basket, and went to a field where turnips were growing. He filled the basket with turnips and hastened back with it to the garden where

he had left the Princess. There he found her standing by a rose-bush, looking as sad as ever, pulling a rose slowly to pieces without appearing to know what she was doing.

"I have brought companions for you," he said. "Here is a basket of turnips," pointing to the basket which he had put down, "and here is a magic wand," handing her a pretty, slender wand, bright with many colours. "Each of these turnips," he then said, "will become any woman you wish her to be, if you will touch it with the magic wand and name the woman you would like." The Princess took the magic wand, and as she wished much for her favourite maiden Brinhilda, she touched one of the turnips, calling out at the same time, "Brinhilda, my dear Brinhilda, come to me." The turnip immediately jumped out of the basket, and stood before her a full-grown woman; and the woman appeared to be no other than Brinhilda, just as she had last seen her at the marble basin.

"Here I am, dear Princess," said Brinhilda; "what can I do for you?" The Princess then told Brinhilda all the story about

Number Nip, and how she had come there, and how he wished her to marry him, which she did not wish to do. Then the Princess took Brinhilda through the garden, showing her all its beauties and talking to her as they walked along, just as they used to talk when they walked together in her father's gardens. Then she took her into the palace and showed her all its grand rooms, and all the beautiful dresses and jewels which Number Nip had given her. Brinhilda admired the dresses and jewels greatly, and both were delighted as they looked them all over again and again.

After spending some hours with Brinhilda, the Princess went back to the basket of turnips in the garden. She now thought she would be happier if she had all her other nine maidens as well as Brinhilda, and also a pet cat and a pet monkey which she had in her father's palace. So she touched the turnips one after another, calling each of her maidens by name as she did so, and they all stood before her. She then touched the two last turnips, and called for her pet cat and her pet monkey, and there was pussy mewing

at her feet, while the frisky little monkey jumped on her shoulder and looked so funnily into her face.

Now that the Princess had all her maidens and her monkey and her pussy cat with her, she was not so unhappy as she was before. The maidens walked about with her in the garden during the day, and in the evening they all sang or danced pleasantly together. Often the Princess played with her pussy and her monkey, and she laughed and grew merry at their sports.

After the maidens and the pussy cat and the monkey had been with the Princess for some weeks, the Princess, when passing her mirror one day, noticed that she was looking young and blooming, just like a rose newly opened in a fine dewy morning ; but then she thought that her maidens, who used to look young and blooming too, were beginning to look old. Every day after that she watched her maidens, and they appeared to look older and older, and the pussy cat and the monkey appeared to be growing older and older too. She anxiously asked her maidens what was the matter with them, and whether they felt

unwell. "No," they said, they were quite well. She then caused all the nicest food she could think of to be given to them, but yet they appeared to get older and thinner, and more faded every day.

One bright sunny morning she came out of her bedroom in high spirits after a pleasant night's sleep, and went into the breakfast parlour humming to herself a merry song as she entered. But what was her horror and surprise when she saw her maidens, in place of walking lightly forward as usual to say good morning to her, rise with difficulty from their chairs, and come hobbling and limping towards her, some using brooms as crutches, and others holding on by the backs of chairs, which they were with difficulty pushing before them ; while all of them were coughing badly, and scarcely able to breathe. Indeed, they looked so very ill that the Princess thought they could scarcely live an hour longer. The pussy cat, too, was dragging herself along, unable to lift a foot from the ground, while the monkey, which used to be so lively, could only raise its head a little off the floor and look at its

mistress with an eye that seemed already glassy and dead.

The Princess fled from the room, and ran in search of Number Nip. She knew he was in the garden, and so she hastened to the top of the tower above the palace gate which led to the garden, and called aloud to him to come to her help. When he came, she burst into tears and scolded him with angry words, saying, "You are very unkind to me. You know that the only pleasure I have had here has been the friendship of my maidens and my pussy cat and my monkey; and because you think I have been too happy, you are taking them from me again, for now they are all dying in the breakfast parlour."

Number Nip said, "My darling Princess, I love you too much to try to make you unhappy; and if I could keep your maidens and pussy cat and monkey from getting old and from dying, I would do it. But you know that after turnips have been pulled they begin before long to fade, because their juice, which is their life, gets gradually dried up, and when the turnips are quite dry and have no

juice any more, they die. Now your maidens and pussy cat are only changed turnips, and they have been gradually drying up and will soon die, just as if they had remained turnips. It is true I have great power, and can do many wonderful things, but I cannot keep them from fading and dying. I am very sorry for your sake, and I will do what I can to make you happy again." Then he handed her the magic wand and told her that if she would touch her maidens and pussy cat and monkey with it, they would all become faded turnips, which she might throw away into the rubbish heap, and that then he would bring her fresh turnips, which she could make into companions for herself again.

The Princess took the magic wand, and, running back to the breakfast parlour with it, she touched her maidens and pussy cat and monkey with it, one by one, and twelve faded turnips lay on the floor. She then took up the faded turnips and threw them into the rubbish heap. After she had done that, she went through every part of the garden in search of Number Nip, as she was

impatient for the basket of fresh turnips, that she might make her maidens and pussy cat and monkey over again. But Number Nip did not come back to the garden for a long time, and when he did come he had an empty basket. When the Princess saw that the basket was empty, she was angry, and said to Number Nip, "You are very cruel for cheating me in this way."

"No, my dear Princess," said Number Nip, "I am not cruel. I really wish to make you happy; but when I went down to the valley where the field of turnips was, I found it was winter, and that all the turnips were done—not one was to be found. I am indeed sorry you should be so lonely here, and I will yet do what I can to get companions for you. I will make myself into a travelling merchant, and I will go to the nearest town in Silesia and buy turnip seed, which I will bring back and sow; and in three moons' time there will be plenty of fresh turnips."

But the Princess would scarcely listen to him or look at him, and she went into her favourite bower and sat down and wept. Number Nip followed, speaking kindly and

lovingly to her, saying that he would lose no time in getting the turnip seed, and that he would order his fire spirits to keep their fires below the ground well burning, to make the turnips grow fast. But she still wept, and would not look at Number Nip, and said, "You have taken me from my home, and from my father and my mother, and my brothers and sisters, and after mocking me for a time with companions in this prison, you have taken them all from me and left me alone. You are an unkind and wicked spirit."

As nothing that Number Nip could say to the Princess did her any good, he went off, as he had proposed, to the nearest town for turnip seed. When he came back he sowed it in the place where he knew it would get the warmth of the sun best and grow soonest. After he had sown it, he went to his fire spirits and told them to keep good fires burning below the turnip field, so that the turnips might grow soon. The fire spirits did as their master told them; and the heat of the sun's rays as the day got longer, with the heat of the fires below, made the turnips grow very fast. Number Nip went to see them every

day, and he was glad to find that they promised a good crop by early spring. The Princess often went with him to the turnip field, and the only pleasure she now had in her palace prison was in looking at the turnips and watching how they grew. Still she was weary and sad, and a great part of every day she used to spend sitting in the shade of a great gloomy fir-tree. Number Nip was sorry that she spent so much time there, and he was much disappointed to see that she did not love him a bit better yet than at first—indeed, that she did not love him at all. Still he never wearied of being kind and loving to her, and of constantly watching her and doing everything for her which he thought she would like. As Number Nip knew nothing of the love between man and woman on the earth, he never imagined that he would have any difficulty in gaining the love of any woman, if he was only kind and loving to her. He never imagined that the Princess, before he carried her away, could have loved some one else, and that no kind attentions by him could ever make her give up her love to the some one else and agree to marry him in place of

the some one else. He believed that she would yet learn to love him, and agree to marry him in the end; and so he still kept her a captive in his palace, and persevered in his loving attentions to her. But the more he tried to persuade her to marry him, the more determined she became that she would not marry him. She had loved some one else before Number Nip carried her off. There was a handsome and brave young Prince, called Prince Ratibon, and his lands were near the lands of the Princess's father, the King of Silesia. Prince Ratibon used often to visit the King of Silesia; and the Princess and he became great friends. From friends they became lovers, and they loved each other dearly. They were just about to be married when the Princess disappeared. When Prince Ratibon heard that she was gone, and that no one knew where, he was so grieved that he could not bear to live any longer in his castle amongst his own people, and so he wandered away into the woods and lived in a rocky cave alone like a hermit. There he spent all his time thinking of his beloved Princess, and in mourning over her loss. The

Princess, also, in her palace prison, mourned because she had been taken away from him, and because she knew he would be grieving for her. The longer she was away from her Prince the more she disliked her palace prison, and the more anxious she became to escape from it.

Winter gradually wore away ; and a long, dreary winter it had been, both to the Princess in her prison, and to the Prince in his cave in the wood. Spring came, and the turnips had grown so well during the winter that Number Nip told his fire spirits that they might put out the fires which they had kept burning for three months in the earth below the turnip field. The turnips were now large enough to be changed into all sorts of little animals by the magic wand ; and every time that the Princess went to look at the turnips she took the wand with her, and amused herself by making flies or beetles or little birds out of little turnips. Number Nip was pleased to see her doing this, as he thought it helped to brighten her spirits a little for the time, and to take away her sad looks. Indeed, he sometimes thought her

face beamed with happiness when she saw a turnip become a little bee or a little bird, and fly away over the trees. But why did she look happy at such times? Number Nip did not know why; but I know, and I will tell you. She was thinking and planning quietly in her own mind about how she was to get away from her prison; and at last she did think of a plan that she was sure would do.

Once, when Number Nip was not beside her, and did not see what she was doing, she touched a little turnip with the pretty wand, and it became a little bee. She then said to the little bee, "Fly away, fly away, little bee, beyond the Giant Mountains, seek for my Prince Ratibon, and tell him that his Princess still loves him, and that she longs to be with him."

The bee gave a cheerful, happy hum, and away it flew high over the trees. The Princess watched it, but it had not flown far when a hungry swallow came darting along with its open mouth, and in a moment the little bee was in the swallow's stomach.

The loss of her bee vexed the Princess very much; but she quickly touched another

turnip, and made it into a merry, chirping grasshopper. As soon as the grasshopper leaped on the grass, she said to it, "Hop away, hop away, little grasshopper, over the mountains and over the valleys, until you get beyond the Giant Mountains, and hop, and hop about everywhere until you find my Prince Ratibon, and when you find him, say to him that his Princess is here in this palace prison, and that she longs with all her heart to escape from it and to fly to his arms."

The grasshopper chirped a merry "Yes, yes," and away it hopped over the meadows ; but it had not hopped far when one of Number Nip's long-necked cranes saw it as it passed him, and darting out his long neck towards it, he seized it and swallowed it.

The Princess grieved over the death of her grasshopper as much as she had grieved over the death of her bee. Yet she lost no time in touching another turnip with her wand, and she told it to become a magpie. So up flew a magpie, and sat on the branch of a tree chattering beside her. "Fly away, fly away, pretty magpie," she said ; "fly over the Giant Mountains until you find my Prince Ratibon.

I know he is mourning somewhere for me. Tell him to mourn no longer, as I still love him dearly, and that although I am a prisoner in this palace prison, I will break out of my prison in three days, and will meet him at the end of the great dark wood on his own lands, which reaches to the foot of the Giant Mountains. Tell him to be at the edge of the wood next the mountains to help me when I come."

The magpie flew away over the Giant Mountains until it came to the great dark wood, and still away and away it flew until it came to the cave in the middle of the wood, where the Prince lived in sadness and sorrow. The Prince was sitting under the shade of a great oak tree near his cave, thinking of his beloved Princess, whom he thought he would never see more, when he heard a voice, which he did not know, pronounce his name. "Ratibon," it said. He started and looked about, but saw no one. He then listened anxiously, expecting to hear it again. "Ratibon," it said a second time. The voice he now thought came from the tree above him, and looking up he saw a

magpie hopping from branch to branch of the great oak tree, and as it did so it repeated his name again three times. "Chattering bird," he said to it, "who has taught you to repeat the name of a wretched creature like me? I have lost my beloved Princess, and I only wish now to die here forgotten by every one." As he said that, he took up a stone to throw at the magpie to frighten it away; but the stone dropped from his hand, and his arm fell down by his side without any strength in it.

The magpie then said to him, "Prince Ratibon, your Princess has sent me to tell you to mourn no longer, to say to you that she still loves you, and that, although she is a prisoner in a grand palace, she will escape from her prison in three days, and will meet you at the side of this dark wood next to the Giant Mountains, where she will need your help."

As soon as Prince Ratibon heard this joyful news he started from his seat. His face beamed with joy, and he begged the magpie to tell him all she knew about his Princess; but the magpie could tell nothing more, and merely told over again the message which

the Princess had given her. She then rose high above the oak tree, and flew away back across the Giant Mountains to Number Nip's garden. Prince Ratibon remained no longer in the cave, but hastened home to his palace. He there told the unexpected news, and everybody rejoiced with him. He ordered three hundred of his bravest and most faithful knights to be ready ; and on the morning of the third day he and the three hundred knights were at the edge of the great wood next to the Giant Mountains, where the Princess had told him to wait for her.

When the magpie got back to the Princess, she told her that she had seen the Prince, and had given him the message ; and while the Prince and his knights were preparing to go to the place of meeting, the Princess prepared for escaping from her prison. She did not look sad any more when Number Nip came near her, and she spoke to him kindly and lovingly when he spoke to her. This greatly delighted Number Nip, as he thought she was now really beginning to love him, and that she would soon consent to be his wife.

On the morning of the third day after the

maggie returned, the Princess dressed herself beautifully in the loveliest of rose-coloured satin, and she adorned herself with jewels which sparkled with the brightest of diamonds. She then threw a lace veil over her head, and walked out to the terrace in front of the palace to meet Number Nip. When he saw her he was more delighted than ever. She told him she had so dressed herself to meet her lover, and to be ready for her wedding. Number Nip, thinking that she meant him as her lover, was so overjoyed at the Princess's words that he fell on his knees before her, and seizing her hand he kissed it very warmly, saying, "We will be married now ; we will not wait longer." But she drew back her hand, and said, "If I were to marry you now, how would I be sure that you would be always kind and loving to me?"

Number Nip answered, "To prove that I will be always kind and loving to you, just tell me what I shall do for you, and I will do it, however difficult."

"Then go to the turnip field," she answered ; "count all the turnips in it, and come back and tell me how many there are. If I am

to be married to you, I must make all the turnips into people, and all the turnip people must be asked to the marriage to hear you promise to be always kind and loving to me after we are married."

Number Nip said that he would go at once and count the turnips, and come back soon and tell her how many there were. So off he went to the turnip field as fast as the wind, and he very soon counted all the turnips; but, to make sure that he had not made any mistake, he counted them a second time. He was much annoyed, however, to find his second counting different from the first. So he counted them a third time, and he was still more annoyed to find his third counting different from both the first and the second counting. He then went on counting and counting for a long time to make sure that he had counted correctly. When at last he did find out the true number of the turnips, he went back to tell the Princess.

But what had the Princess been doing all the time that Number Nip was puzzling his brains about the turnips? She had a fine large juicy turnip beside her, which she had

pulled the evening before without Number Nip knowing. Soon after Number Nip went off to count the turnips, she went to the place where her fine juicy turnip was hid, and taking it out, she touched it with the magic wand, and told it to become a fiery winged horse. All at once a fiery winged horse stood beside her, snorting out fire from his nostrils. She jumped upon his back, and told him to fly away over the Giant Mountains, to the edge of the great dark wood. So away he flew over the mountains as the Princess had told him ; and how joyful she was at the thought of now being free from her prison, and on the way to her beloved Prince Ratibon !

When Number Nip came back to the garden, he hurried through every part of it in search of the Princess, as he was anxious to tell her the number of the turnips, and to ask her now to marry him. When he could not find her in the garden, he ran into the palace, searching every room, and calling out, "Princess, Princess." But he could not see her, and no one answered his calls. He now thought that something must be wrong, and

taking wings to himself, he rose high up in the air. When high in the air he looked around everywhere, and at last he saw the fiery winged horse with the Princess on his back ; but the horse and the Princess had nearly reached the outside of Number Nip's mountain kingdom ; and as he knew that he could not overtake them before they were out of his kingdom, and that he could not follow them beyond the border of it, he seized two clouds that were floating past, rolled them up into a thunder-bolt, and hurled the thunder-bolt after them. But even the thunder-bolt was too late, as they were now beyond the boundary of Number Nip's kingdom, and so had got into the Prince's own lands. The thunder-bolt did no harm, except that it tore into splinters a great old oak tree, which had stood firm against all the storms at the edge of the dark forest for more than a thousand years.

Number Nip then rose still higher and higher, and in wild rage and despair he told all the clouds and the winds of heaven how the Princess whom he had loved so much had cruelly fled from him. After his burst of rage was over, he returned to his palace ;

but he felt very sad and lonely, and the only pleasure he had was in visiting every spot in the park and in the garden, where the Princess used to walk with him. At one place he saw her footprint in the sand, and he knelt down and kissed it, weeping bitterly as he did so. He now cared no longer for his grand palace, or his pretty garden, or his great park, all of which he had made so very beautiful, and which he had loved and admired so much, while the Princess was with him.

After kissing the footprint again and again, he rose from the ground, wiped away his tears, and with pride and anger in his face, he stamped three times with his foot. All at once a great dark chasm opened wide in the ground and swallowed up the palace. As soon as the palace had disappeared, Number Nip darted down into the chasm after it, and its yawning sides closed above him. The garden and park disappeared at the same time, and nothing was then seen but the bare hill-sides. Down and down went Number Nip, and he did not stop until he had reached the very centre of the earth. There he sat down on the throne of his dark kingdom, with a burning hatred in his

heart against all mankind ; and he said to himself in great anger, " If ever I visit the upper world again, I shall have my revenge for being so badly treated there, both by man and woman."

While all this was going on with Number Nip, Prince Ratibon was riding joyfully away with his beloved Princess now restored to him. He took her to her father's palace, and the King and the Queen, and her brothers and sisters welcomed her back with great rejoicings. The Prince and the Princess were married soon after, and they lived long and very happily together.

In memory of the joyful recovery of his bride, the Prince built a new city as the capital of his Principedom, with a grand new palace in it, and he gave the city his own name; and it is called Ratisbon to this day.

I must now tell you that "Number Nip" was only a nickname for the Spirit of the Giant Mountains, and that he got that nickname because he was counting the turnips when the Princess escaped from him.

After Number Nip went away it was ages before he was seen again in the world.



III.

BENEDICK AND CATRINE.

I TOLD you in the last story that Number Nip did not come back to the world for ages. Indeed, it was nearly a thousand years before he came to it again.

After being so very long in his dark kingdom, working hard in making laws and governing his dwarfs and fire spirits, without any change, he must have been very much in need of a holiday. So he began to feel the need of a holiday, but he could not think how he might get one. At last his favourite spirit, whose principal business was to amuse him, said to him one day, "Let us have a pleasure trip to the Giant Mountains."

Now Number Nip did not at first like the notion of going back to the Giant Mountains, because he had not forgotten how badly he had been used by the farmers and the judge; and how the Princess, whom he had loved so much, had fled from him, and left him alone. But his Minister of Fun, and his other ministers too, all said again and again that the Giant Mountain land was the place for a holiday; and at last he agreed to go, although it was to please them rather than himself. They all got ready for the journey; and Number Nip had no sooner given the word to start than they were amongst the Giant Mountains, and at the very place where Number Nip's palace had been before. He made the palace, and the garden, and the park all over again, just as they had been when the Princess was with him. Yet nobody who happened to pass that way could see anything but the bare hill-sides and the grassy valleys, with scattered bushes and trees here and there.

After Number Nip had made his palace, and garden, and great park over again, he wandered through and through them, think-

ing of everything that had happened when he was there with the Princess nearly a thousand years before. At first, when he visited all the different places where he used to walk with the Princess, but especially the place where her footprint had been left in the sand, he felt as if he could still love her if she was there. Indeed, he sometimes almost fancied that she really was there ; but when he remembered how she had gone off and left him, he became furiously angry with all the men and women in the world, and said to himself, "I will yet be revenged on them ; I will punish them as they deserve." He then flew up to the top of a hill near his palace, and looked down upon the valleys where people lived. He was greatly astonished at the change which had taken place since he was there before. He saw large towns, with great churches and spires, where there used to be only little villages of thatched cottages. There were many more cornfields, too, stretching far in all directions, with rich waving crops ; and many thousands of cattle on endless grassy plains ; and many well-made high-roads, with

crowds of busy men, and horses, and waggons, and carriages always passing along ; and there were many other changes besides, which almost bewildered him at first. Still he was angry with all men and women, and he said again to himself, "I will punish them ; I will make them feel my wrath now that I am here once more."

Just as Number Nip had said that, he heard some people talking and laughing not far from him. He looked about, and he saw three men coming down a mountain-path, which led to a city named Hirschberg, which he then saw some distance off. One of the three men appeared to be talking to the others very merrily, and telling them a story. At length, when they came near to the foot of the hill on which Number Nip then sat, the man who was telling the story gave a loud "Hilloo," which echoed through the valley, and then he called out, "Number Nip, Number Nip, come down and tell us why you carried off the pretty Princess. But she gave you the slip at last ; ha, ha, ha !" Although the man called out so, he did it merely as a bit of fun, not knowing that Number Nip was there, or that he even could hear him.

When Number Nip heard what the man called out, he was more angry than ever, and he said to himself, "I will go roaring furiously down upon them, and dash them to pieces over the rocks." But then he thought that if he should do so he would so frighten all the people in the country round that no one would venture to go through the Giant Mountains, and that he would not have the chance of punishing people now and again just as he wished. So he did not go roaring down on the men, as he had intended.

The three travellers, after passing on a little farther, came to a place where two mountain-paths crossed each other. The man who had told the story and called out to Number Nip, went straight on to Hirschberg, while the other two turned off into a path which led to a different place. Number Nip followed the man who went to Hirschberg—although the man did not see him, that he might know what house he went to, as he meant to punish him for his impertinence in making so free with his name and with the story about the Princess. Number Nip saw that the man went into an inn

when he got to Hirschberg, and Number Nip then went back to the mountains.

When Number Nip had got back to the mountains, he met an old Jew who appeared to be going to Hirschberg. Number Nip then changed himself into the likeness of the young man whom he had just followed to the inn, and he said to the old Jew, "I see that you are going to Hirschberg. I am going there too, and I will be glad of your company on the way." The Jew was quite pleased to have a companion through the lonely mountains, and so the two went on together. They had not gone far, however, when Number Nip said to the Jew, "I know a shorter path than this one; here is the way:" and Number Nip led the Jew into a thick wood. They had not gone far into the thick wood when Number Nip stopped all of a sudden, seized the old Jew by the throat, bound him hand and foot, robbed him of his purse, put the purse into his wallet, gave the Jew a few good kicks, and walked off. The Jew, as you may suppose, was in a very bad way. As he was off the road, and lying in the thick wood, unable to stir a foot, he

feared he might die there of starvation before anybody would find him. So he began to call "Help! help! help!" as loud as he could, thinking it possible that he might be heard by some one on the road. He had not called long when, to his great delight, he saw a well-dressed grave-looking man coming towards him. The man looked as if he had been a well-off burgher of Hirschberg, and when he saw the Jew in such a sad plight he asked kindly what had happened to him. The Jew told him the whole story, and the grave-looking man at once cut the cords, bathed the wounds which the kicks had made with cool water from a spring, and gave the sufferer a pleasant cordial to drink from a bottle which he happened to have in his pocket. The old Jew was soon able to walk, and his good friend went on with him to Hirschberg. He took him to the inn which he had seen the man who had insulted him enter; and he told the landlord of the inn the story about the Jew being bound, and beaten, and robbed. He also told the landlord to give the Jew everything he wanted; and handed him a purse full of gold to pay for whatever

he might give the Jew. Then he went away; but no one saw or knew where he went to. Of course you know that the grave-looking man was no other than Number Nip himself, although neither the Jew nor the landlord of the inn could guess who he was.

After the Jew had rested a little, he began to look about the room, and he then saw, to his great surprise, the man who had bound, and beaten, and robbed him, as he thought, sitting drinking a bottle of wine, and chatting very merrily with some other visitors. The Jew looked at him again and again, and he was quite sure it was he. His face was exactly the same, and he had on the same clothes; and there was the very leathern wallet into which he had put his purse when he stole it, lying on a chair. The Jew said nothing to any one, but walked quietly out of the inn, and hastened to the Bailiff of the city, who looked after the punishment of rogues, and told the Bailiff all the story about how he had been bound and beaten and robbed, and how the man who had done it was sitting in the inn drinking wine very merrily with his friends. The Bailiff at once ordered his officers

to go to the inn and seize the thief, and take him before the Mayor of the city, to be judged. The officers went to the inn and seized the man, to his great surprise, saying that he was a thief, and that they must take him to the Mayor. The man told them that he was no thief, but an honest tailor, who had come to Hirschberg in want of work; but the officers of course did not mind what he said, and took him to the Mayor. The Mayor asked him who he was.

He said, "My name is Benedick. I come from Liebenau. I am an honest tailor in search of work."

"Why did you bind and beat and rob the Jew?" asked the Mayor.

"I never did any such thing," answered the tailor; "I never saw the Jew until he came into the inn half an hour ago. I am really an honest man."

"But how am I to believe that you are honest?" asked the Mayor.

"You can search my wallet, and if you find the Jew's purse, you can condemn me," replied the tailor.

The Mayor then ordered the wallet to be

searched, and when the tailor's clothes were taken out, a purse full of gold dropped from them on the floor. The poor tailor said he did not know anything about the purse, or how it had got into his wallet; but that he was certain that he did not put it there. As soon as the Jew saw it, he said it was his purse, and that the tailor had stolen it from him in the wood, and had put it into that very wallet. Of course the Mayor did not mind what the poor tailor said after that, and told him that as it had been clearly proved that he had bound and beaten and robbed the Jew, he must be condemned to death. So the Mayor did condemn him to death, and ordered the officers to put him in irons, and take him to prison until next morning, when he was to be executed. So the officers put him in irons, and took him to prison, as the Mayor had ordered.

All the people who were in the Court said the Mayor had done quite right in condemning the tailor, as he deserved nothing less than death for robbing and beating the Jew so badly; and the grave-looking man, who had been so kind to the Jew, said even harder

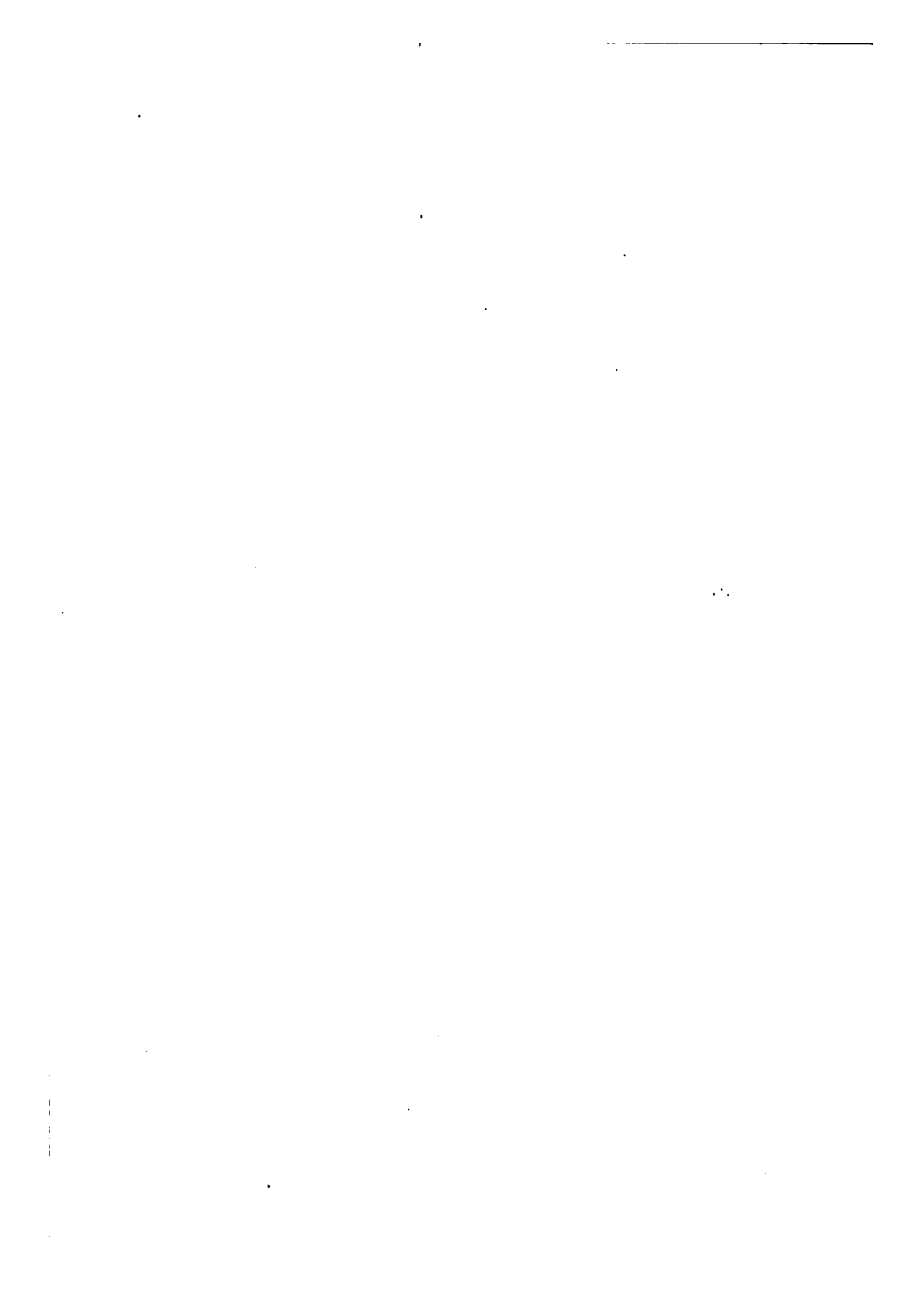
things against the poor tailor than anybody else in the Court. He said that such rogues ought not to be allowed to live, and that he was glad the laws of the city against rogues were so severe, and that the Mayor knew how to punish those who disobeyed them. When the grave-looking man had said that, he left the Court, and nobody saw him again. The people of Hirschberg were puzzled to know who he was, or where he could have gone to without anybody seeing him. Some said he was a great lord of Silesia, and some said he was no other than the King himself in disguise, while others whispered among themselves that the Spirit of the Giant Mountains could take any shape.

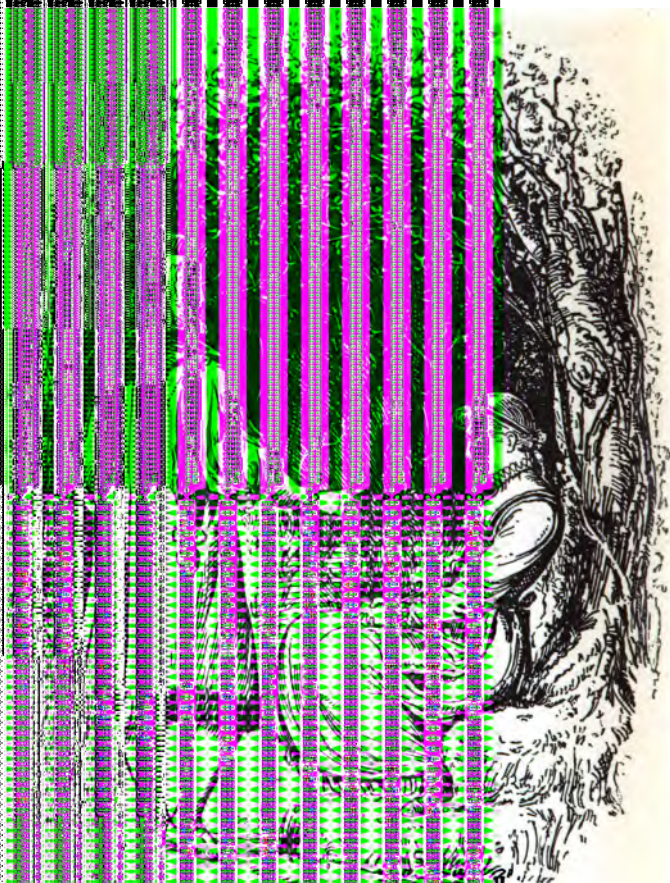
The reason why people did not see where he went to was, that as soon as he had left the Court he all at once changed himself into a raven when nobody was looking, and flew up to the top of a high tree.

Early next morning, after the gallows for the poor tailor had been set up, the raven came and sat on the top of it, waiting until the poor tailor should come, that he might pick out his eyes. But the tailor did not

come that morning. A good priest, who had seen the tailor in prison, went to the Mayor, and begged him to allow the poor man to live three days longer, as he wished to talk to him about his Father in heaven, and about Christ, who came to save men from sin. The Mayor agreed, so that the raven was disappointed, and flew away to the top of the rock among the Giant Mountains, which was his favourite place for looking all about him to see what men were doing.

Number Nip spent the three days ranging about through the woods and the hills—sometimes in one shape, and sometimes in another. In one of his walks he happened to see a young woman sitting under the shade of a tree weeping and groaning, as if her heart would break. When he saw her he remembered the days when he used to try, by every kindness, to comfort the Princess when she was in deep sorrow in his palace prison; and he said to himself, “This young woman has been used badly by some one, and she is in sad grief. Although I said I would vex and punish all men and women kind, when I had a chance, I will do her no harm. I will





see what is the cause of her bitter tears, and try to comfort her."

So Number Nip again put on the appearance of a respectable grave burgher, and went towards the girl, and said to her,

"I see, my girl, that something serious has happened to you. Tell me what it is. I may be able to help you."

The maiden had been sitting with her face buried in her hands, and did not see Number Nip until he spoke to her. When she heard his voice she started up suddenly, and was about to run away in a fright, when he spoke to her again, with a kind smile on his face, and said,

"Do not be afraid of me ; I wish really to help you, if I can."

The girl then stopped and looked at the kindly and grave-faced man ; and as she did so, Number Nip saw that her face was young and beautiful, but very sorrowful.

"Do not trouble yourself about me, kind sir," said the maiden ; "I am the most unhappy creature in the world. I am a murderess. I have killed the man I loved. I cannot tell you how deeply grieved I am for the ill I

have done. I have fled from my home, and will wander about in the wild woods until I die of cold and hunger."

The grave-faced man looked at the young woman very seriously, and, as if much astonished, he said to her, "You a murderess! and so lovely a face too! You look as if you could not hurt a fly. Men and women can do very bad things, I know, but I will not believe that you are so bad as you say."

"Sir, if you would like to hear my story, I will tell it you," she said.

"Yes, do let me hear it," he replied.

"My name is Catrine," she then said; "I was born in the village of Liebenau, and lived there with my father and mother. When I was a child, there was a little boy named Benedick, who lived with his mother, a poor but honest widow, in the same village. He was my playmate, and he and I were constantly together at our happy little sports. When Benedick grew to be a tall young man, he told me that he loved me, and wished me to be his wife; and he was always so loving and kind to me that I soon learned to love him too, and I promised to marry him: but,

oh ! sir, I have made him forget all the good things that his mother taught him, and I have made him a thief and a robber, and he is condemned to die for stealing."

"You make him a thief !" answered Number Nip. "How?"

"Yes, sir," she said ; "I have made him a thief and a robber, and so I will be the cause of his death. He bound and beat and robbed a poor old Jew in this very wood, and he is to die to-morrow at Hirschberg for it."

"How did you make him beat and rob the Jew?" Number Nip asked, looking very much astonished.

"I will tell you, sir," she answered. "My poor Benedick is a tailor, and he left Liebenau, where there was very little tailor work going on, and crossed the mountains to Silesia to seek work there. Just as he was going, he took me in his arms and kissed me, and said, 'I know you will be true to me, my darling ; and when the apple trees are covered with blossom, and the swallows are building their nests, the third year after this, I will come back to Liebenau and make you my wife.' I said to him that I would be true to him,

and that I would marry him when he came back. Now, the third year when the apple trees were covered with blossom, and when the swallows were building their nests, Benedick was true to his promise, and came back to me. He then asked me to marry him as I had promised ; but, foolish girl that I was, I made fun of him, not thinking what I was doing. 'I cannot marry you,' I said to him, 'until you get more money, and be able to get a nice house, with many nice things in it. Go away again and get more money, and then come back and ask me to marry you.' Poor Benedick was sadly disappointed when I said that, and answered with a deep sigh, and tears in his eyes, 'Ah, Catrine! you are too fond of money and fine things, as you now prefer them to your faithful lover. When you put your hand in mine three years ago and promised to marry me, I had no money, but only my two good hands to work for you ; and they would work for you now so long as they have strength to do it. For three years I have worked hard for you, counting every hour till the time was out, and I have got enough money to furnish a tidy little cottage like my

mother's, and now you say, "Get more money still." Ah, Catrine! is this how you reward me? You despise me, and prefer a little money to me.' 'No, Benedick,' I said, 'I do not despise you; but just go away again, work for some more money, and then come back, and we shall be married and be happy.' 'Then I will go away once more; I will go to Hirschberg,' he said, 'and I will work hard and save money, and you will not see my face until I have enough gold to buy you, as I cannot buy you now.' After he had said that he fled from me in anger and vexation, and I have not seen him since. When crossing the mountains to Hirschberg his good guardian angel left him, and he beat and robbed the Jew, as I have told you."

When the young woman had finished her story, the grave-looking man shook his head, and said, "It is a sad business, and I am indeed sorry for you; but what good can it do to sit crying there? That will not help your lover, and I am sure he deserves all the help you can give him."

"Indeed, sir," she answered, "I was on my way to Hirschberg to do what I could to save

him, but while going through this wood, where my poor Benedick so sadly forgot himself, my sorrow became too much for me, and I felt that I could go no farther, and that I must die in this place."

"What did you mean to do at Hirschberg?" asked the grave-looking man.

"I meant to go to the Mayor of the city, and to fall at his feet, and beg and pray him to spare the life of my poor Benedick. I thought he might spare him for my sake; and if I should find that he did not do so, I meant to die with my faithful lover, whom I had used so badly."

After Number Nip had heard all Catrine's story, he was so sorry for her, and also for her lover, that he resolved not to punish Benedick any farther for his impertinence to him. So he said to Catrine, "Wipe away your tears, and be no more sad for your lover. Before sunset to-night he will be as free as the birds in the air. Go back to Liebenau; and when you hear a gentle tapping at your window to-morrow morning, at the first crowing of the cock, make haste and open the door, for it will be Benedick that knocks. But take care

that you be not unkind to him again. I must tell you also, for your comfort, that it was not Benedick who beat and robbed the Jew; so that you are blaming yourself wrongly in saying that you caused him to do so wicked a deed."

The poor girl looked greatly astonished at what the grave-faced man said; and as his face looked kind, she could not think he was telling what was not true. Yet the news which he told her was so good that she could not believe it at first. "Oh, sir!" she said, looking earnestly up in his face, "if what you say is true, you must be either a prophet, or my lover's good angel in the form of a man."

"No; his good angel I am not," replied Number Nip; "but his good friend I will be, as you shall know by to-morrow morning. I was in the Court in Hirschberg when your lover was condemned. All thought he had done the wicked deed; but I know he is innocent. I have great power in Hirschberg. I will go there at once. I will take off his chains, and set him free from prison this night. Hasten home, and have no more fear."

The girl did as she was told, and lost no time on the way back to Liebenau. It was sunset before she got to her home. She went to her little room, but did not go to sleep. She waited anxiously for the first crowing of the cock; but I shall leave her waiting until I tell you what had happened to Benedick.

The good priest who had persuaded the Mayor to put off the execution of poor Benedick for three days had bidden him good-night, on the evening of the third day, for the last time, as he thought. But as the good priest was leaving the prison, Number Nip, in an invisible form, met him at the prison door, and walked in. Until he entered the prison Number Nip had not quite made up his mind what his plans would be for setting free the poor prisoner; but after thinking for a little, he contrived a plan which he knew would do well. He slipped out of the prison, and followed the priest—still invisible—to his house, and taking one of the priest's black robes from his wardrobe, he put it on, and went back to the prison in the likeness of the priest. When he came to the prison door,

and asked to be let in to see the prisoner, the gaoler at once opened the door for him.

As Number Nip entered poor Benedick's cell he said to him, "I have come back to ask you whether you have any message for Catrine." At the mention of Catrine's name poor Benedick sobbed and wept like a child, and could not speak a word. Number Nip was then really so sorry for him that he could not help setting him free at once. So he said to him, "Poor Benedick—or rather I should now say, happy Benedick—wipe your tears away, do not sorrow any more ; you will not die. I know that you did not rob the Jew, that you are an honest fellow, and that you have done nothing which deserves punishment. So I am come to take off your chains, and to free you from prison."

Number Nip, without another word, loosed poor Benedick's chains, and they fell from his wrists and ankles to the ground. Number Nip then exchanged clothes with Benedick, and taking a key from his pocket, he said to Benedick, "Let us see whether this key will fit," and opened the door of the cell. "Now," he said to Benedick, "you are a free man ; and when

you are out of prison, hasten away across the mountains to Liebenau. Do not stop until you reach Catrine's home. You will get there at the first cock-crow. Then tap gently at Catrine's window. She is waiting for you, and is in deep grief because she made you go away from her; and she will welcome you back with joy. Be cautious as you leave prison—make haste—fare you well!"

Benedick at first thought he was in a dream, but as soon as he became satisfied that all was real, he was nearly beside himself with joy. He fell on his knees, and thanked his good friend with a most grateful heart. He then rose, bade him a hasty farewell, and walked out, dressed in the priest's gown. The gaoler, thinking he was the priest who had entered a few minutes before, opened the prison gate, and allowed him to walk freely away. Just before he had left the prison cell his good friend gave him a crust of brown bread and a black pudding, to eat by the way, in case he should feel too faint from hunger to go on his journey. Benedick sped over the mountains as lightly as a bird, and never

felt the need of the crust and the black pudding until he reached Liebenau.

Now, let us go back to Catrine, who is sitting in her little room close to the window anxiously waiting and listening. At first she hears a step of some early riser on the street, and she hopes that it is Benedick; but there is no tap at the window, and it passes. Again, she hears a little gust of wind sweeping round the corner of the house, but it dies away, and there is no tap at the window. She still waits and listens, and often she runs to the door and looks through the key-hole, thinking she might see Benedick as he crosses the street towards her little house. Still she waits and listens. Now she hears the great bell of the Monastery warning the people that it is time to get up to their morning prayers, or matins, as they were called. Again, she hears the night-watchman sounding his horn for the last time before he goes home to rest from his weary night watch. At last she hears the first cock-crow, and again and again the cock crows with all his might. Now she thinks Benedick must come, if he is to come at all, and, as she gets up

impatiently and looks out at the window, the dawn is just appearing over the distant mountains, and all the clouds towards Hirschberg are glowing with a fiery red. The gloomy blood-red clouds make her think for a moment of something terrible, and she fears that, after all, Benedick has not got free from prison, and that his last moments have perhaps come. She turns away from the window, and throws herself on her bed, just ready to faint. As she turns from the window she sees that her candle has nearly burned itself out in the socket of the candlestick, and the flickering light, as well as the blood-red clouds, make her think of death ; but she has not noticed the little red rose on the top of the burning wick of her candle, which is the sign of something good just about to happen.

Catrine had scarcely thrown herself on her bed when she heard, as in a dream, a softly-moving step outside, then three gentle taps at the window, and then a low loving voice, which said, "Catrine, my darling, are you awake ?"

Catrine started from her bed, rushed to

the door, and was soon in the arms of some one there—some one who kissed her fondly, and clasped her to his breast. But when she looked up and saw, in the dim light of the dawn, that the some one had a priest's dress on, she called out, "Ah! then, father, you have come to tell me that Benedick is no more," and sank to the ground in a faint. But Benedick held her gently in his arms, bathed her face with cool water, and kissed her again and again, saying, as he did so, "My darling, I am your Benedick; I am not a priest." She gradually opened her eyes, and when she saw that it was really Benedick, and not a priest, she was more than satisfied, and said, with tears of joy in her eyes, "Yes, you are Benedick, my own Benedick, and you will never leave me more."

Catrine was soon able to sit up, and Benedick and she then sat and talked together for a long time. Benedick, of course, told her all the story of what had happened to him. It was a great mystery to both of them how it had all come about; but they were more than thankful that it had ended so well.

Before Benedick had finished his story his throat felt parched, and Catrine ran for a glass of water to enable him to finish it. He then said, "Now I think I begin to feel hungry;" but poor Catrine had nothing in the house to offer him to eat except a little stale bread and salt. He then remembered the crust of bread and black-pudding which his kind friend the priest had given him on leaving prison, and he took them from his wallet, meaning to share them with Catrine for breakfast. But the black-pudding felt heavy—indeed, it felt more like a bag of solid iron or lead than a pudding. He cut it in two, and, to the great surprise of both, a very shower of gold fell from it to the ground. Catrine was at first frightened when she saw it, thinking it might, after all, be the Jew's money; but Benedick said to her very earnestly that she must not think anything of the kind, as he had never forgotten his good mother's lessons, and would rather die of hunger than steal a farthing from anybody. He then said, "I got it from the good priest when he let me out of prison. He must have known it was gold, and not a

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black-pudding, and no doubt he meant it as a marriage-present for us." So they both thanked the good priest in their hearts, and felt very happy.

Benedick and Catrine were married soon after ; and as they had now plenty of gold to enable Benedick to set up as a master tailor, they left their native village, and went to Prague, the capital of Bohemia. There they got a nice house and shop, and furnished them well. Before they were long in Prague, Benedick became known all through the city as an honest tailor, who always gave good cloth and did his work well. So he prospered, as every honest good workman does prosper in the end, and he and his wife Catrine lived long very happily together. They had many children, who all grew up and behaved well when they became men and women, because they never forgot the good lessons which their father and mother had taught them when they were children.

But I must now tell you what happened at Hirschberg after Benedick left the prison. Number Nip remained in Benedick's cell with Benedick's clothes on all night ; and in

the morning, just about the time when Benedick was tap, tap, tapping at Catrine's window, a knock, knock, knocking was heard at the door of the prison cell. It was the good priest, who had come to say a few more kind words to poor Benedick, who, he thought, was still there, just before he died. The priest, of course, thought that Number Nip was really Benedick, and he was pleased when the pretended Benedick said to him, "I am quite innocent, and so I do not fear death."

The pretended Benedick was then taken away by the Mayor and his officers ; and soon after the sun was up, the people of Hirschberg were talking to each other in the streets, and saying that they were glad that the rogue had been put to death for robbing the Jew, as it was not safe for honest people that such rogues should be allowed to live. But by mid-day a very wonderful thing was talked of by every one in the streets of Hirschberg. The Mayor had sent his officers to take down the body of the criminal, and bury it ; but when the officers went to do as they were told, they found nothing hanging

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IV.

MAX THE FARMER.

NUMBER NIP still lived amongst the Giant Mountains, and was always ranging through them. He was often seen walking along the foot-paths in the form of a man or of a woman, or perched on the top of a rock like a raven or an eagle, or bounding from one side of a valley to another like a deer, or crouching in savage places amongst the rocks or woods like the Rysow, which was a terrible wild beast that was seen nowhere except among the Giant Mountains, and that only when Number Nip was there. Number Nip, too, was often heard or felt when he could not be seen. He might be heard like a gust of

wind amongst the trees when there was no wind, or like a roaring waterfall where there was no water. At times he might come down like a shower of stones from a mountain-side as travellers were passing along ; or he would stop a waggon, although empty, that it could not move ; or he would break an axle ; or he would tumble a great rock across the road when a carriage was driving along.

He went on frightening travellers or annoying them with his pranks among the Giant Mountains, for a long time after he came back from the prison at Hirschberg, without caring much to think whether the travellers were good or bad, or whether they deserved to be punished by him or not. At last he found another chance of doing a good turn to a poor honest man and his wife and children ; and I am now to tell you the story about that.

There was an honest hard-working farmer named Max, who had a little farm in the part of the country near the Giant Mountains, called Riechenberg. There was another farmer who had a large farm which lay close to Max's little farm. The large farmer

was a very greedy man, and he wanted to get Max's little farm as well as his own large farm. So he always made disputes with Max, and summoned him very often before the Courts. Poor Max had to get lawyers to go to the Courts for him ; but the large farmer had summoned him so often to the Courts, and he had so much money to pay to the lawyers, that he had to sell all his horses and cattle—even his very last cow, which gave milk for his children. After that he could not pay his rent, or work his farm ; and so the large farmer managed in the end to get the little farm to make his own large farm larger. Poor Max was then in a sad way, because he had no money to get food or clothes for his wife and children, and no home for them to live in. But he had two strong arms, and he said to himself, "I will not let them starve so long as I have these strong arms to work for them." But then, again, he remembered that there were plenty of workmen all about the country, while there was not plenty of work. So he said to Margaret, his wife, one day, "If I had only a hundred dollars, we would go to the other

side of the mountains, where we would be away from our bad neighbour the big farmer; we would get a little farm there, and a horse and some cows, and we would all be comfortable and happy again. You have two rich brothers on the other side of the mountains; and if one of them would lend us a hundred dollars, we would get a little farm. I will go and tell them our sad case, and I am sure they will take pity on you and our little children, and help us. Of course I would give them interest for the money, and faithfully pay it back as soon as we could save enough."

Max's wife knew her brothers better than Max knew them, and said she did not think they would lend him any money, as they were two proud misers, and did not like poor relations coming about them; but as she could not think of any better plan, she agreed that he should go and try them. So early next morning Max was ready for the journey. He said to his wife, "I feel light of heart, and some thought whispers to me that I shall find a kind helper before I come back." Having said that, he kissed

his wife and children, and went on his journey.

Max travelled all day, and as he had to cross the high passes of the Giant Mountains, he was tired and hungry when at night he got to the village where his wife's two rich brothers lived. He first knocked at the door of the eldest brother, and told him all his sad story ; but the eldest brother would scarcely listen to him, and said he would give nothing to a spendthrift, and he shut the door very rudely in his face. Max then went to the younger brother's house, but the younger brother treated him no better than the elder brother, and said to him that he did not believe his story, but that if it really was true that he had lost everything in the law Courts, he should just go home and try and find in the law Courts what he had lost there. " I have made my own fortune," he added, " and I will keep it. Every man of sense ought to do the same." Max then begged the younger brother to give him supper and a night's lodging at any rate, but the younger brother said, " No ; I have friends with me to-night, and I cannot

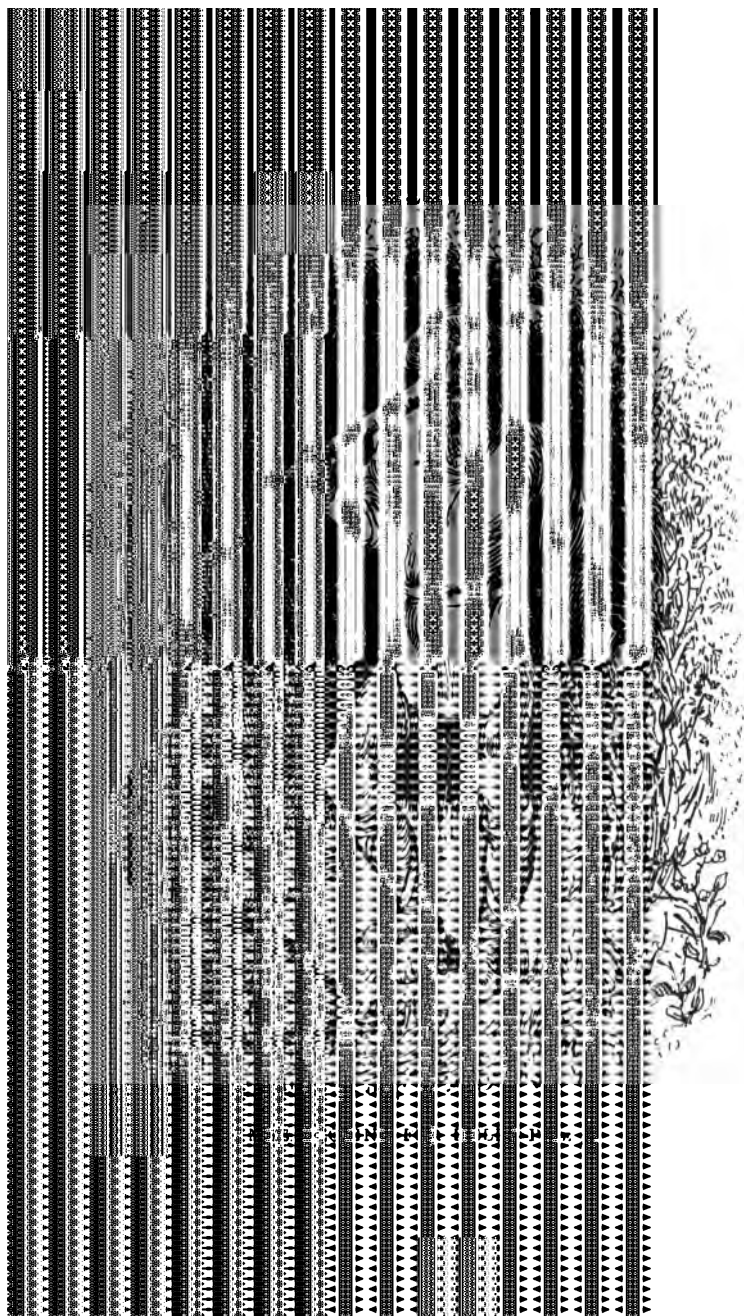
be troubled ; it is moonlight, and I daresay you will be able to find your way back through the mountains."

Poor Max was of course sadly disappointed at being so badly treated by his two rich brothers-in-law. As he had no money, he could not go for supper and a bed to the inn, and so he turned away sorrowfully from the village ; but as he was too tired to go back through the Giant Mountains that night, he went into a field and lay down under the shelter of a hay-stack. Although he rested he did not sleep, as he could not help thinking all night of his poor wife and children.

As soon as the dawn appeared in the east, Max arose and walked slowly back towards the Giant Mountains, still feeling very miserable. When he reached the mountains, thinking and thinking of nothing but his starving wife and children, he was so very wretched in mind that he felt he could not go home. "What could I say or do," he repeated aloud to himself, "when my little ones would come running to meet me, calling, 'O father, have you brought us some bread?' I could not bear that. I cannot go home. What shall

I do? I know there is one among the Giant Mountains, who sometimes helps people in distress; perhaps he might help me, if I only knew how to call on him without offending him. He does not like his name to be spoken, and often punishes people badly, who speak it. But as I can get help nowhere else for my wife and little ones, I will not mind being punished by him, if I can only get help for them; so I will call him." He then called aloud at the very pitch of his voice, "Number Nip! Number Nip! come to my help."

The echo of Max's voice had not died away among the mountains, when a few yards in front of him he saw a big strong man all sooty and black, like a collier. The man had a long red beard hanging over his breast, and he had angry flaming eyes, and he carried a great cudgel in his hand, just like a tree broken off by the roots. As soon as he came near to Max, he raised the great cudgel as if to knock him down. "Great Spirit of the Mountains," Max called out, falling on his knees before him, "forgive me for calling you by the name which you do not like, but I



did not know how else to call you. Only listen for a moment to my sad story, and if you will not help me, then crush me like a worm to the earth." When Number Nip saw the sorrowful face of the man, and heard that he wished help from him, his anger cooled a little, so that he did not at once knock him down as he had intended ; but he said to him, "Why do you disturb and insult me by calling out that name which every one knows I dislike ? You deserve death for what you have done."

"I am truly sorry," replied Max, "that I have offended you ; but I am driven to seek your help, as no one else will help me. All that I need is the loan of a hundred dollars. I am an honest man, and I would pay the money back in three years, and give interest for it too."

"Why do you come to me for money ?" asked Number Nip. "Who ever heard of me lending money ? Go to your relations and borrow from them."

"Alas ! alas !" replied Max, "one soon finds he has no relations when he is poor and needs help, however honest he may be.

Although my relations are very rich, they will give me no help."

"Let me hear your story," Number Nip then said; upon which Max told him his sad story from beginning to end.

When Number Nip had heard the story, he felt sorry for Max. He had never lent money to any one before, and thought that it would be a queer thing for him to turn money-lender, like a Jew; but he said to himself, "I will help this man." So he then said aloud to Max, "Come, follow me," and he turned and walked into the wood. Max followed him, and on and on they walked until they came to a dark, narrow valley. At one side of the dark, narrow valley a great rock rose high above the trees. At the foot of the rock the trees and bushes grew so very close that it was difficult to get in amongst them; but Number Nip pushed on through a narrow path until he came close to the rock, and Max pushed after him, although he was now getting terribly frightened, not knowing where Number Nip might be leading him. When he got to the rock the branches of the trees and the bushes were so close, all above him

and around him, that he could scarcely see anything. He heard water roaring and tumbling as if into a great deep pit, but he could see neither the pit nor the water; and at every step he trembled lest he should fall headlong into the pit where the roaring waters were. But he had not gone far when he saw a blue light dancing on in front of Number Nip, who was just a few steps before him. He now saw that he was in a great cavern, and he caught a glimpse of the roaring waters, which were dashing over dark rocks into a deep, dark, wide chasm. Number Nip stopped after they had passed the chasm, and when he stopped, the light rose up and hung like a lantern from the roof. Close to the wall there was a large copper pot full of bright golden dollars, and Number Nip, pointing to them, said, "There, take what you want; but you must write me a note promising to pay the money back in three years, with interest for the loan of it." Max was now full of joy at this good fortune, which had come on him so suddenly when he was not expecting it. He very carefully counted out a hundred dollars, and he counted them

three times over to make sure that he should not take more than the right number. While Max was counting the gold Number Nip went away to another part of the cavern to get paper and a pen and ink for Max to write the note with; and when he came back Max wrote the note, promising to repay the money with interest on that day three years, and gave it to Number Nip. Number Nip put the note into an iron box, locked the box, and put the box into a press in the wall, and locked the press. He then turned to Max, and said, "Hasten home, my friend, and make good use of the money; but remember, that it must be paid back to me here, with interest, on this day three years. If you forget to keep your bargain, I will go to you and remind you of it in a way that you will not forget. Farewell!—depart, and look well at this place, that you may find it when you come back."

"I thank you with all my heart," replied Max; "and as I am an honest man, you may depend on me being back with the money on the very day it is due." Max then left the cavern, and easily found his way through the thick bushes and trees to

the path where he had met Number Nip. He looked well as he walked along, and felt sure he would know the place again, and the way back to it, when he should return with the money.

Max now hastened home with a light heart, and although he had eaten nothing that day, he felt no need of food. It was sunset before he reached the hut which was then his home. As soon as his children saw him they all ran to meet him, calling out, "Father, father, have you brought any bread? we are so hungry." "My darlings, we shall have plenty of bread now," he said; "where is your mother?" He hastened into the hut, and there his wife sat in a corner weeping, and afraid to look up, as she expected to see only disappointment and misery on Max's face. But he took her in his arms and kissed her, saying, "Let us rejoice together and be happy, for our fortune is now made; there are the hundred dollars," putting the money in her lap, "and here is a bag of flour I have brought with me from the last village I came through; so that you see I have fared well on my visit to your two rich brothers."

"Indeed you have," she answered, "and I am so glad of it, for I could not have believed it of them. No poor relation ever got a farthing from either of them before. What can have softened their hearts to make them so kind to us now?"

"Of course," he answered, "you expected that they would call me a worthless spend-thrift and the like, and shut their doors in my face. You could not think that either of them would be so brotherly and good as to take me in and give me a comfortable supper, and a comfortable bed, and a comfortable breakfast before leaving this morning. Indeed, I believe that you thought so ill of your brothers, that you feared I would have to sleep hungry and cold in some hayfield. But look at the dollars; there is a whole bag of them, and they are all pure bright shining gold."

Max's wife then began to boast of her brothers for the first time in her life, and to praise them for being so good and brotherly. "If we had just gone to them at first," she said, "how much misery we would have saved ourselves." She now talked and

talked so much every day of her kind rich brothers, that Max began to get tired of her talk. Yet he did not tell her where he had really got the money ; but he said one day, " I must now tell you one thing that your younger brother said to me. It was so true and good that it is worth far more than any gold I got from him. It was this, ' Every man must make his own fortune, or it will not be made at all.' Well then, we have got the dollars, but we must make a good use of them and work hard, for it is only by hard work that we can gain anything even with the help of the dollars. Besides, we have to pay back the dollars in three years with interest."

After that Max's wife thought more of helping her husband in every way she could, than of talking of her good rich brothers. They left their little hut because it was too near the greedy large farmer, and went to another part of the country a good way off. There Max got a small farm, bought a horse and some cows, and set to work ploughing the land and sowing his crops as hard as he could. The first year's crops

were so good that Max got money enough for them to rent more land to add to his little farm, and to buy another horse and some more cows. The next year he got still more land, and horses, and cows; and he now had a large farm. The crops of that year were so very large and good, and his flocks prospered so well, that he was now quite rich.

One day after Max had got the money for the third year's crops and for some cows which he had sold, he said to his wife, "To-morrow we must have a holiday. I will tell Jan, our horseman, to have the waggon ready by sunrise, with two good horses yoked to it. We will all get tidied, and put on our Sunday clothes, and we will go a holiday trip in the waggon."

"But why a holiday to-morrow?" asked his wife. "It is not the birthday of any of us, and it is not one of the days which we have been wont to keep as a holiday. To-morrow is my cheese-making day, and I cannot let my good curd be wasted."

"Let Jane, the milkmaid, make the cheese

for once, for we cannot put off our trip even for a day."

"But where are we to go for our holiday?" she then asked.

"We shall go and visit your rich brothers beyond the Giant Mountains, and I must take my hundred dollars and interest with me to pay my debt. To-morrow it is due; and as I am an honest man, I must keep my promise to the good friend who lent me the money."

Margaret was delighted at the idea of a visit to her kind, rich brothers, and so she consented to let Jane make the cheese for a day.

Next morning all rose early, and were ready to start by sunrise, for the journey was a long one, and Max knew that the drive over the Giant Mountains would be a hard one for the horses. All got tidied and dressed; and when they looked out, just as the sun was rising over the tops of the far-off Giant Mountains, they saw Jan at the door with the waggon, and the horses yoked to it, ready to start. Max took his largest purse and counted the hundred dollars, and so much more for interest, very carefully into it. Very

soon they were all seated in the waggon. Jan gave the warning crack of his whip to the horses, and away they started. The day promised to be sunny and fine, and all were in the best of spirits. The children were shouting and singing with perfect delight, as there was nothing they liked so much as a holiday trip in the waggon; and the horses appeared to enjoy the trip too, for they whipped their tails about and started with such a pace as to show that it was with right good-will they went.

After the waggon had entered the Giant Mountains, and when the steep part of the road began, Max jumped off the waggon and said to his wife, "We will all get down here, and walk through the wood by a nice grassy path which I know, and we will meet Jan and the waggon at the top of the pass, where he will wait for us if we are not there first." Max went along a narrow path into the wood, and his wife and children followed him. After going on a good way, Max lost the path; and on looking all about him, as if not sure where he was, his wife thought he had got bewildered, and said to him, "Let us

all go back to the road." But Max said, "No, I cannot go back; I must go on." He then called his wife and children to come and stand round him, as he had something to tell them which they would like very much to hear. "We are not at this moment going to see your rich brothers," he said to Margaret. "It was not they who gave me the money. They called me a spendthrift and other bad names, and drove me from their door without even a morsel of food, hungry and tired as I was; and I spent the night, without supper, under a hay-stack in a field. No, it is not to them we owe all our comfort and happiness, but to a good rich friend who lives among these mountains. You, of course, know who I mean—it is no other than the Spirit of the Giant Mountains, who has been nicknamed 'Number Nip;' it is to him I am going now to pay back the money."

At the name of Number Nip Margaret started and shuddered, and all the children ran close to her and held on by her dress, saying with tears in their eyes, "Oh, mother, do not go farther; come away from this dark wood." They were in great fear of their

father taking them to Number Nip. They had often heard stories of Number Nip as they sat round the fire in the winter evenings, and the stories they had heard were all about the wicked and cruel things which people said he did ; so that the very name of Number Nip used to frighten the children and make them run and hide under the blankets in their beds, in case they should see him looking in at the door upon them. In some of the stories it was said that he was a great mountain giant, and that he often watched for poor travellers and ate them up alive ; and the children were now in great fear that they would be all seized and eaten before they could get out of the wood. So they begged their father and mother to fly from the wood at once. But Max tried to quiet their fears as well as he could, saying that Number Nip really was good, and not a devourer of travellers ; and he then told them all the story about how he had met Number Nip in the wood, and how Number Nip so kindly lent him the money which had made them all so comfortable and happy. While speaking of Number Nip's goodness, Max

felt so thankful to him in his very heart, that the tears stood in his eyes, and he said very earnestly, "Yes! I must keep my promise to our kind friend; I must go and meet him in the cavern under that rock," pointing at the same time to the high rock at the other side of the dark little valley, "and I must pay him his hundred dollars and interest. Do not be afraid of him, my children, if you meet him, even although he should look big and black and sooty. Take his hand kindly if he offers it to you, and thank him for his goodness to us, for that would please him much. But now I must go."

The children seized their father's skirts to hold him back, at the same time clinging all the closer to their mother; but he forced himself away from them, and was out of sight in a moment among the thick bushes in the valley. Max found his way back to the rock without difficulty, but he was astonished to see that the bushes and trees in front of the rock were not so thick as they had been when he was there before; and he could see the whole face of the rock from the top to the bottom quite clearly. He

looked and searched all along the foot of the rock for the opening into the cave, but he could not find it. He remembered the exact place where the opening had been, but now no opening was there. He knocked again and again on the rock, and called out to the Spirit of the Mountains, saying, "I am Max, come to pay back the hundred dollars with interest as I promised; open the door and let me in, or come out and get it." But no one came, and he heard no voice. He did not even hear the rushing waters which had roared so terribly in the dark chasm. He listened long and anxiously, but he heard nothing except the pleasant cooing of a pigeon on the top of the rock far above him. So he had no help for it but to go back to his wife and children, carrying the gold with him. When his wife and children saw him coming up towards them through the trees, they rushed joyfully down to meet him, for they had never expected to see him again alive; but he looked sad and troubled. "What has happened to you," his wife asked, "that you look like that?"

"I could not get into the cavern," he said,

"and our good friend has not come for his money, although I called him over and over again. He cannot say that I have not honestly kept my promise, for this is the very day the money should be paid."

He then sat down on a grassy bank to think what he should do. He said, "I will call him by his nickname, although he does not like it, for that always makes him come; and he may beat me for it if he chooses. I will not mind that, if only he gets his money back." So Max called out at the pitch of his voice, "Number Nip! Number Nip! come and get your money." His wife and children were frightened for Number Nip coming, and put their hands on his mouth to try to stop him; but the more they tried to stop him the more he called out. One of the children then screamed of a sudden, and said, "Look! there he is; I see a big black man behind that tree;" but no one else could see anything except trees and bushes.

They all sat waiting on the grassy bank for a long time, as Number Nip would not come. Max at last, much vexed and disappointed, rose up and said, "We need wait

no longer, he is not to come. We must just take the money back with us ; but he cannot say that it was not offered to him when due, or that I have not kept my bargain faithfully." Just as he had said that they heard a rustling as of a gentle wind among the trees, and the gentle wind fanned their cheeks very pleasantly. As it came puffing along it blew a piece of white paper from behind the tree where the child said he had seen the black man. "Oh, father! you like bits of white paper," one of the children called out; "I will pick up this for you." So the child ran after the paper, picked it up, and gave it to his father. Max opened the paper, and he was much astonished to see that it was the very paper on which he had written his promise to pay back the money, for there was his writing on it, clear enough; but as he looked he saw that something else was written on it which *he* had not written. He read the new writing aloud, and it was this, "You have paid me by your good conduct; keep all you have.—Number Nip." "How glad I am!" Max then called out. "Our good friend has both seen us and heard us, and he knows

that I am honest, and have kept my bargain. We can now go home with a light heart."

Margaret and the children were as much delighted as Max, and they all went on their way talking of the goodness of their friend, and shedding tears of joy for very thankfulness.

When they came to Jan and the waggon at the top of the hill, they spread their dinner beside a clear running spring under the shade of a great rock, and they all said it was the most delightful picnic that they had ever enjoyed. After eating their dinner and amusing themselves for a time beside the big rock, Max said, "Now, we must think of going home." But his wife said, "I have a fancy to cross the mountains and see my brothers. We are as rich now as they are, and they will not be ashamed of us. If they do not choose to be friendly, we can afford to go to the inn." Max would rather have gone home; but, to please his wife, he agreed to pay a visit to her brothers; and all the children were, of course, delighted, as they had never seen their uncles or the place where they lived.

So the horses were yoked again to the waggon. Jan cracked his whip, and away they drove merrily over the pass and down the other side of the mountains.

It was evening when they got to the elder brother's house. They knocked at the door, and a strange person came to it. Margaret asked if her brother was at home. "Your brother," said the strange person, "who is he?" and when she told him, he said, "Ah! he is dead a year ago. Everything went wrong with him. His wife and children were all taken away by a fever, his horses and cattle all died, he lost all his money, and after that he died heart-broken and in misery. Margaret then asked the strange person if he knew anything of her younger brother. "He is no longer here either," replied the strange person. "He made an unjust claim against a neighbour, and summoned the neighbour before the Courts. After a long time the dispute was decided by the judges against your younger brother; and after it was decided, he had so much money to pay to the neighbour and to the lawyers that he had none over. He then

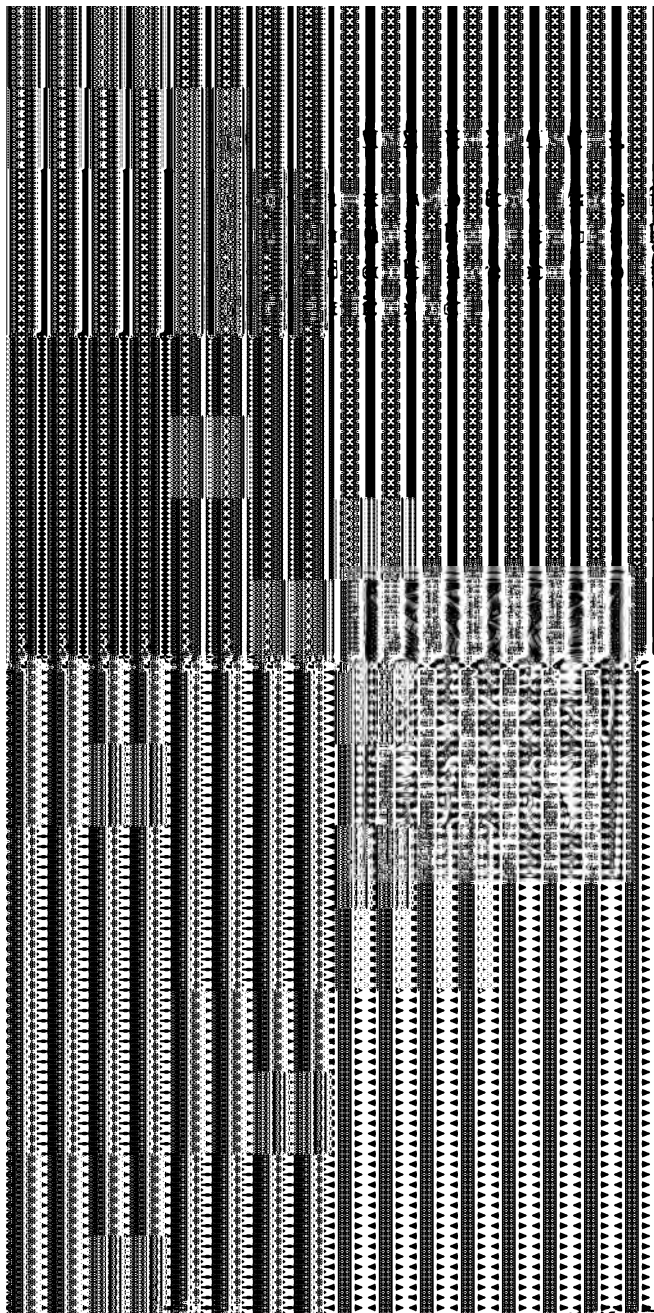
lost his farm, and he is now wandering about the country, a half-crazy beggar in perfect wretchedness."

Margaret of course was deeply grieved at what had happened to her brothers, and wept bitterly. Max was also very sorry, and was willing to forget how he had been so badly used by them three years before. They both asked the stranger to find out the younger brother if he could, to rent a little cottage for him, and to get some one to take care of him ; and they said that they would send money every year to keep him comfortably.

The stranger asked them to come into his house for the night. He was kind and attentive to them, and next morning, after thanking him and bidding him good-bye, they got into the waggon which Jan had at the door by sunrise, and they returned through the mountains to their own home.

Max still continued to prosper. Everything went well with him and his wife and his children, and they were much liked and honoured by everybody who knew them.

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V.

STEPHEN AND HIS GOOD WIFE
JANE.

MAX never told any one except his wife and children where he had got the money which set him agoing in his new farm, as he did not wish other people to know, lest they should go to the mountains and trouble his good friend Number Nip, asking him for help when they did not deserve it. Yet Max's neighbours knew all about it before long. Margaret told it as a secret to the wife of another farmer, who was her greatest friend ; and the other farmer's wife told it in a secret to the village baker's wife, who was *her* greatest friend ; and the village baker's wife told it as a secret to

the barber, and the barber told it as a secret to every one who came to his shop ; so that very soon the wonderful story was the talk of all the village and of all the country round.

Well, just what Max had expected really happened. All the idlers who did not like to work, all the spendthrifts who had spent their last farthing, and all the greedy people who wished to get more money than they could make a good use of, went in crowds to the Giant Mountains, and wandered about through them, calling on Number Nip to give them money. People who used to hunt for hid treasures of gold, too, went searching and digging into every hole and corner amongst the hills and valleys, always expecting to come on hidden pots of golden dollars. Number Nip, of course, both heard and saw all the money-seekers quite well ; and although he was annoyed with their impertinence and their greed, he did not think it worth his while to take any notice of them at first. But after a time he began to amuse himself by leading them astray with blue fires flickering through the woods at night ; or he would now and again cheat the gold-hunters by

making them find a pot in some secret place which appeared to be full of gold, but which they found to be filled with stones and rubbish when they had got it home.

At last Number Nip became angry at the crowd of fortune-seekers, and losing patience with them, he drove them from the mountains by terrible storms of thunder and hail. For long after that almost every one who ventured among the mountains was beaten or bruised, and sometimes barely escaped with life. It then became so dangerous to travel among the mountains that very few ventured to travel; and Number Nip had his woods and valleys almost to himself.

One day Number Nip was sitting quietly under a tree, amusing himself by listening to the silence all around him, and he said to himself, "I like this silence better than the brawling noise of the crowd of money-seekers whom I have driven away; yet it amuses me to see the face of a human being now and again, and even to hear a human voice, if it is a pleasant one." He had scarcely said that to himself when he saw a poor woman coming along a footpath among the trees towards the

place where he sat. She had four children with her. The youngest she carried in her arms, another she carried on her back, a third she led by the hand, and the eldest ran behind her carrying a basket in one hand and a small rake in the other. Number Nip began to feel kindly towards this woman as soon as he saw her. "She must be a truly loving mother," he thought, "as it is no holiday work for her to drag about these four children in that way; and what must her toil be in labouring for them night and day? Truly she pays dearly for the sake of being a wife and a mother." Number Nip felt in a pleasant humour, and as if he would like to do some good. So he resolved to have a little talk with the woman, and to know more of her affairs. The woman set down her children on the soft grassy turf, and began to pull the fresh green leaves from the trees and bushes; but she was not long at her work when her children began to quarrel in their play, and to scream and roar at the pitch of their voices. She at once ran to them, spoke kindly to them, tossed them about in fun, showed them how to amuse themselves in building little houses, and play-

ing at little games which she planned for them. Very soon they were all laughing and romping in great glee, and she could then go back to her work. She had not half filled her basket with leaves, however, when a gad-fly had bit some of the children, and they began to cry again. She threw down her basket and ran to them at once, took the little things who had been bitten on her knee, and kissed them and soothed them very lovingly. This did not make them quiet, and so she ran and gathered for them some beautiful ripe blackberries which were growing a short way off. But the little boy who had been carried on his mother's back still cried as badly as ever, saying the gad fly-bite was sore ; and he threw away in a pet the berries which his mother had given him. The mother then called out, "Number Nip, come and take this petted boy." She called out just as she used to do at home sometimes to make a crying child quiet without any harm coming of it. But, of course, it was different calling on Number Nip among the Giant Mountains, although the mother did not think of that ; so Number Nip at once came and stood before

her, dressed like a black sooty collier, with a collier's pick over his shoulder. "Here I am; come along, my boy," he said, holding out his hand to the petted child. This frightened the mother terribly, and she said to Number Nip, "I only called for you to make my children quiet, and as they are all quiet now, I do not need your help."

"But you must know," replied Number Nip, looking rather stern, "that no one calls on me here without paying for it. I must take you at your word. Give me the boy, that I may eat him;" and he again stretched out his great black hand to the child, as if to lay hold of him. The mother then seized the child, and clasping him fondly to her bosom, said in an angry voice to Number Nip, "Be off, you wicked monster, or I will strike you with my rake. I will lose my life before I give up my child."

This bravery of the mother rather astonished Number Nip; and it made him start back a few steps. He then said quietly, and in a pleasant voice, "I really do not eat children, although foolish people in the country tell such bad stories of me. I will

do no harm either to you or to your children ; but I beg of you to give me the boy. I have taken a fancy for him, although he *is* a petted, crying boy. He will live with me, and I will make him rich and happy; and then he will be able to help you and all his brothers and sisters. I will give you five dollars for him; here!" holding out to her a handful of pure, bright golden dollars.

"I will not sell my boy," she replied, in a very firm voice, "for all the gold in the world;" and she clasped him still closer in her arms.

"What a fool you are!" said Number Nip. "You would still have three children over, and surely they would be enough to plague you. How you must work for them all, to keep them even alive!"

"Indeed, I toil hard for them," she answered; "but, then, I am their mother, and a mother's love lightens the toil. Children do bring sorrow, but the comfort and blessing they bring too make up for the sorrow a hundred times over."

"Comfort and blessing!" answered Number Nip, with a laugh; "to work for them, and

watch them night and day, and to bear with all their squalling, and pets, and bad tempers, and to give them the very food out of your own mouth. Truly, if these are comforts and blessings, what would discomfort and misery be?"

"Ah! good sir," she said, "it is only a mother who knows a mother's feelings. Just look at this little darling, who cried himself into a fit of sulks a few minutes ago—he now clings to me so lovingly. Oh! I do not work and toil for them half so much as I would like to do. If I had only a giant's strength in my arms, how much I would do for them!"

"But are there no arms except yours to work for them? Have you no husband? or has he no arms?" asked Number Nip.

"Oh! yes, I have a husband, and he has arms and hands, too, as I often feel to my cost," she answered.

"Surely your husband does not lift his hand to you, and so good a mother too?" said Number Nip.

"Well, well," she answered, "when I married my Stephen I promised to the good priest to take him for better and for worse ;

and, after all, there are worse husbands than he."

"But why did not a sensible, good woman like you choose a better husband?" asked Number Nip.

"Indeed, sir," she answered, "I would just choose Stephen over again, wild as he is, if I had another choice. When I promised to marry Stephen I was a poor, plain, lonely girl, without any money. He was tall and handsome, and as brisk as a bee. He came to me with a golden dollar in his hand, which he gave me when we made the bargain. It is quite true that he took back the dollar from me after we were married ; but, then, I still have Stephen himself."

"Some wives provoke their husbands badly by being too fond of their own way," said Number Nip. "I have seen that often while watching travellers among these mountains. Perhaps you show an obstinate temper to your husband."

"No, no; indeed, I do not," she answered. "If I did show him some of my own temper at first, it is long since he drove all that out of me. Truly, I am as mild

as a lamb to him, whatever he says or does to me."

"Why does he use you badly then?" asked Number Nip.

"It is his love of money which makes him do it," answered the mother. "When I have no money to get food for my children, and ask him for a little, he storms and rages as if he would bring down the house, and says that he had made such a mistake in marrying a woman who had no money. If I had only some money of my own, how happy I would be! and then Stephen would not be so wild and stormy."

"Does Stephen not work at any trade to earn money?" Number Nip asked.

"Oh yes, poor fellow! he works hard for his bread," she answered. "He is a glass-seller. He goes to Bohemia every year, and brings a heavy load of glass on his back, and if he should happen to break any of the glass by accident on the way, his poor wife and children suffer from the cross temper which he brings home with him in place of the broken glass. But I don't mind that; I just bear it."

"But how can you love a man who treats you and your children so badly?" Number Nip asked.

"He is the father of my children," she answered. "How can I help loving him? and when our children have grown big, they will make up for all our toils and wants now."

"That is a poor look-out, I fear," said Number Nip. "Do you often see children rewarding their parents when they are grown up? The boys will very likely be taken by the king for soldiers to fight his enemies, and they may be slain in battle, or they may be wounded and made cripples for life, and so no longer able to help even themselves. Then your girls will probably marry some dashing, worthless fellow, as you have done yourself; and what could they do for you after that?"

"Well," the mother answered, "if my boys should be made soldiers and die, or be badly wounded in fighting for their country, every one would honour them; but then they might return from the wars sound and safe, and bring prize-money with them. I would be quite content with my daughters if they

should marry and have as much comfort in their children as I have."

"Well, well," said Number Nip, "that may look all very fine to you, but I think it is all nonsense and rubbish. Give that boy to me. I will make a gentleman of him, and he shall have plenty of money besides."

But the mother just shook her head, and said nothing. She then stuffed the leaves which she had cut from the trees into her basket, and put the little boy whom Number Nip wished to have on the top of the basket; but the basket, with the boy on the top of it, was so heavy that she could not lift it. When she looked round for Number Nip, she saw that he had left her, and was already a good way off. She called after him, and said, "I asked you to come to-day already, and you came. Please come to me once more, to put this basket on my back; and if you like to do me another good turn, just give the little boy whom you fancied a few pence to buy a birthday cake, for to-morrow is his birthday."

Number Nip came back and said, "Yes, I will help to put the basket on your back,

but I will not give the boy anything unless you give him to me."

The mother was not pleased that Number Nip should ask again to have the boy, and she said rather sharply, "I have told you already that you will not get my child," and she turned and walked away with her children. But she had not walked far when she began to feel the basket with the boy in it getting very heavy, and the farther she walked the heavier it became, until at last the weight became so great that she was almost fainting under it. She then thought something must be wrong with the basket, and that Number Nip had played her a trick. So she placed the basket on the top of a bank, and looked into it, expecting to find that Number Nip had slipped in stones among the leaves ; but after emptying the basket she found nothing but leaves. To make the basket lighter, she put back into it only half of the leaves, put the little boy on the top of them as before, and put the basket on her back, which she could now manage to do, because it was on the top of a bank. She then walked on a little farther

without feeling the basket too much for her ; but it soon began to get heavier and heavier, and it got so heavy that she had to stop to rest again. She took out still more of the leaves, and then she put the basket on her back once more ; but it grew so heavy again that when she reached home she was almost falling to the ground with the weight of it, and she was glad that she had to carry it no farther.

The milk goat and her kids were hungry for their supper by the time the good woman reached home ; and they began to eat with a very good will the fresh green leaves which she spread before them. After feeding her goats she gave her children their supper, and put them to bed. When all her work was done, she took her own supper, which was only a crust of bread and a drink of goat's milk. She then thanked our Father in heaven for all His goodness, and went to bed with a light heart and with hope of good to come.

Next morning the good mother's youngest child awoke early, as he used to do, and called for his drink of goat's milk. The good

mother at once got out of bed, and went to the goats' house to get fresh milk for the child; but you can fancy her astonishment and grief when she found her milk goat and all her kids lying dead on the floor of their house. The poor woman knew not what to think, and she just sat down on a bundle of straw, and hid her face in her hands and wept. "Oh! unfortunate woman that I am," she said, "what shall I do now? Where shall I get milk for my children? and what will Stephen say when he comes home? Surely God's goodness is now leaving me. But I must not think that. Although my goats are all dead, still I have Stephen and my children. Although Stephen may say angry words to me when he comes home, thinking I have neglected the goats, still I will get over that, as it is no fault of mine that they are dead, whatever has caused their death. Harvest will soon be here, and I will go to a farmer, and work hard at the reaping, and get money. After that, when winter is come, I will spin wool and sell it, and get more money. Then I will buy another milk goat, and my children shall have milk again."

After saying all that to herself, the good woman rose and wiped away her tears. She then took another look at her dead goats, and while she did so she saw something glitter brightly on the floor beside them. She stooped down and picked up the thing that glittered, and to her great surprise she found it was yellow and heavy like gold, although in shape it was like the leaf of a tree. She ran at once with it to a Jew, who was her neighbour, and showed it to him. The Jew looked at it carefully, and said it was pure gold. The Jew proposed to buy it, and the woman gave it to him for two golden dollars, which was more money than she had ever seen before.

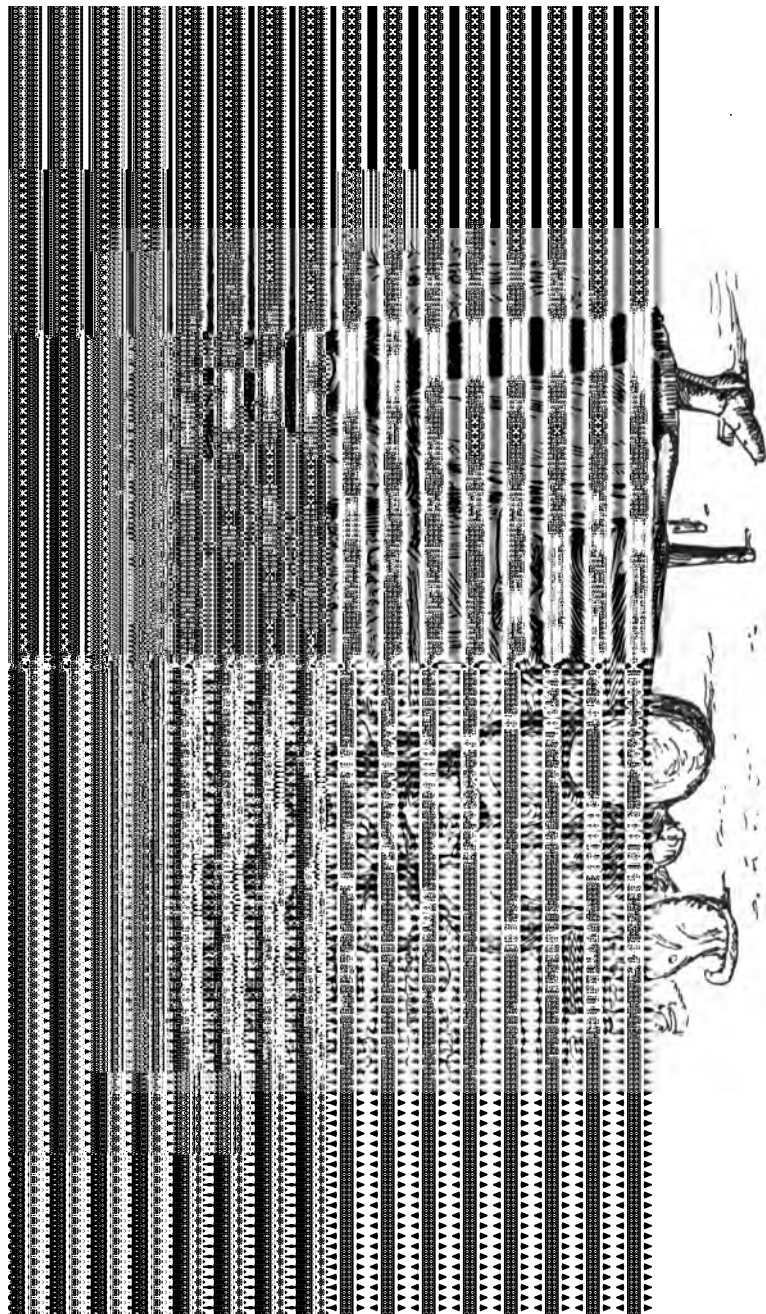
The first thing she thought of after getting the money was to run to the baker's shop for nice white bread for her children's breakfast; and after she had got the bread, she went to the butcher's shop and bought some pork sausages as a treat for Stephen when he should come home, tired and hungry, after his long journey that evening; for she knew Stephen liked pork sausages above all things. How the children did leap and rejoice when

they saw the beautiful white bread for breakfast! Indeed, they were so delighted, that they were quite satisfied with water to drink to their bread in place of goat's milk.

After the children had got breakfast, the good mother went to the goats' house, intending to take away the dead goats to hide them from her husband, that he might not know of the sad loss all at once; but as soon as she had opened the door of the goats' house she saw a great many shining things lying all about the floor; and on looking into the goats' trough, where she had put the most of the leaves the night before, she saw quite a heap of shining things. She took up some of them, and saw that they were golden leaves just like the one which she had sold to the Jew. Her first thought was about her goats when she saw the golden leaves. "No wonder they are dead," she said to herself; "it is from eating golden leaves. My poor, poor goats!" Her next thought was about her wonderful store of riches. "Who ever had so much money as this before?" she said, speaking again to herself. "What can I do with it? where can I put it? If my neigh-

hours hear of it, everybody will talk about it, and thieves will come and steal it. Besides, I would not like Stephen to know of it just yet, in case he should take it all away from me, and leave my children to starve. Shall I lock it in my chest, or dig a hole in the floor of the goats' house, and bury it there?" She thought and thought about it for a long time, and at last she spoke again to herself, and said, "I know now what I shall do. I will go to the good priest of the parish. He has always helped me in my difficulties, and I am sure he can help me now. I will tell him about the rich treasure."

So the good woman went to the good parish priest. She told him all the story about meeting Number Nip in the wood, and about the death of the poor goats, and about the gold. Indeed, she had brought all the gold with her in a bag on a wheelbarrow, and showed it to the good priest. The priest crossed himself with some fear, as good priests do, when he heard of Number Nip and of the good fortune which he knew must have come from him. The good priest and the good woman talked a long time very



JANE TAKES THE GOLD TO THE GOOD PRIEST.—PAGE 116.

secretly about what should be done with the gold ; and at last the priest said, "I have thought of a plan. Count over all the gold carefully to me. I will keep it faithfully for you ; and I will write a letter to you, saying that the gold had been given you by a kind friend for yourself and your children, and that you had given it all to me that I might take care of it for you and your children, and that nobody else, not even your husband, is to have anything to do with it. It will be safe from thieves in my iron box, and your husband will not spend any of it so long as I have it." The good woman at once agreed to the priest's plan. So she gave him the money, and he locked it into his great iron box. The woman then went home, very thankful that she had such a faithful friend as the priest.

Now Number Nip did not at all like the wild Stephen and his bad ways. Indeed, he disliked him just as much as he liked Stephen's good wife and her good ways. So he resolved to reward him very differently from the way in which he had rewarded the good woman ; and it was for the sake of the good woman and her children that he meant to reward him

differently. It was to tame his wildness, and to make him a kind husband and father, in place of a rough and unkind one.

Stephen was on his way back from Bohemia with his load of glass, and he had to pass through the Giant Mountains. His walk through the mountains was the hardest part of his journey, because there were so many ups and downs on his way. It was getting towards afternoon, and he was climbing the last long hill, with his heavy basket on his back, before being quite through the mountains. Many times he had to stop for breath on his way up the hill, leaning on his strong thorn staff. When he got to the top of the hill, and saw that the road went pleasantly down all the rest of the way to the outside of the mountains, he was quite pleased. But he was very tired with his long hard climb, and seeing the broad smooth stump of a large tree which had just been cut as by a wood-cutter's saw, he set his heavy basket of glass down gently upon it, and threw himself on the grass beside it to rest. While lying there he began to think about the hard life he was living—carrying such heavy loads so far year after year ; and

he said to himself, "If I make my wife work harder, to get money enough to buy all the food and clothes which she and I and the children need, then I will not have to spend any of my money at home; and if I do not spend any of my money at home, I will have enough before Friedburg Fair comes round to buy me an ass at the Fair; and the ass will carry my glass in panniers on his back, and my shoulders won't be sore carrying it myself any more. Besides, the ass will be able to carry more glass from Bohemia than I can carry; and after a time I will make more money still, and then I will be able to buy a horse. After I have a horse, I will be able to bring a great load of glass from Bohemia every year, and I will soon grow quite rich by selling it. After I am rich, I will buy a large farm, and I will stock it with flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, and I will become quite a great man, and all the country people will touch their caps to me, and call me sir." Just as he had said that, he heard a sudden blast of wind among the trees. He looked up and he saw that it was a whirlwind, and that it was coming

in great fury towards the place where he was, sweeping everything before it as it came roaring along. In terror of being himself blown away, he seized firm hold of a root of the tree stump on which his basket rested ; but he had not time to think of his basket, and when the whirlwind came to him, it caught up the basket and dashed it with great force against a rock on the opposite side of the road. After the whirlwind was past, and he had courage to look up, he saw that all his glass had been smashed to pieces, and that the road was strewn with the fragments. "Ruin—complete ruin !" he called out. "Ah ! miserable man that I am. It is Number Nip, that wicked Spirit of the Mountains, who has done it ! Oh ! you wicked Spirit, what good can it do you to ruin me like this ? Come and kill me now outright, and make an end of me. What is the use of life to me any longer ?" But after looking for some time in despair at the fragments of glass on the road, he began to pick them up, and he went on picking until he had picked them all up ; and he put them into his basket, saying, "I will take them to a glass-maker

and exchange them for two wine glasses ; and the wine glasses will be the beginning of a new stock of glass for me." So he swung his basket of glass fragments on his back, took his thorn staff in his hand, and walked down the mountain, thinking all the way about how he could best manage to get a new stock of glass to begin his trade again. "There are the goats," he said to himself, "I might take them and sell them to get money to buy glass, but my wife loves them almost as dearly as her children, and she will make a terrible ado if I propose to sell them, and, of course, she will not agree to part with them. So I must try to get them without asking her. Let me see. I will not tell my wife when I get home what has happened to me ; and I will go quietly into the goat-house at midnight, when my wife and children are in bed. I will steal away the goats, and drive them to Friedburg Fair. I will sell them there for as much money as I can get, and buy more glass with the money."

This plan was the best he could think of ; and when he had got near his cottage he went into a wood and hid there until he heard the

village clock strike twelve at night. He then rose from his hiding - place, walked stealthily to his cottage, and climbing softly over a low wall, in place of going round by the gate, he dropped down at the door of the goat-house, listening and trembling all the time lest his wife should hear him. He was delighted to find the goat-house door unlocked and off the latch, as that saved him the risk of noise in picking the lock and in opening the door. He slipped into the goat-house and listened, but all was silent. Then he felt about through the goat-house, but he could feel nothing except some bundles of straw. Neither goat nor kid was there. As he had found the door open, he now thought that some thief had been there before him, and had stolen them. "Misfortunes never come alone," he muttered to himself, and sank down on a bundle of straw, now feeling that he was hopelessly ruined, and that there was no help for him.

But what had Jane, his good wife, been about all this time? As soon as she came back from the good priest's house, she swept and tidied her house, put her children to

bed, and prepared a very nice supper, not forgetting the sausages which Stephen liked so much; and it was all ready just about the time when he should have come. She had asked the good priest to share the nice supper. So the good priest came, and brought with him a bottle of his very best old wine to help to warm Stephen's heart after his weary journey, and to put him in cheerful temper to hear the story of his wife's good fortune, and how the fortune was to be kept and managed by the priest for his good wife and the children.

After the hour passed when Stephen should have come, and he did not come, his good wife became very anxious and impatient, fearing that some evil had happened to him. She went often to the window to look for him, and then she went out into the village, wandering from street to street in search of him, and asking every one she met if he had been seen. But every one said "no," the wild glass-seller had neither been seen nor heard, and some said he was often more readily heard than seen when he came home. She returned to the house, and the carefully

prepared supper was left neglected by the kitchen fire, and of course, got quite spoiled. But the good wife thought no more of the supper, but only of Stephen. "Oh, if he were only here!" she repeated earnestly over and over again. "I fear something has happened to him. Perhaps while coming through the mountains, Number Nip——" but she did not venture to say out what she feared. Then she sat down in a chair, with her cheek leaning on her hands; and again she got up and walked impatiently through and through the little kitchen. The good priest remained with her all the time, trying to comfort her, but she would not be comforted.

Stephen in the goat-house was even more wretched than his good wife, but there was no good priest there to comfort him. His only companions were darkness and his own gloomy thoughts. As he sat on the bundle of straw, he began to feel as if the darkness was never to go away; but at last the faintest ray of light of the earliest dawn stole in upon him. This faint ray of light stole into his heart and made him feel differently from

what he had felt before. He rose from the bundle of straw, and moved slowly towards his cottage door. When he got to the door he knocked gently, and said in a low broken voice, "Jane, my dear, will you open the door for your husband?" The good woman knew the voice, started up at once, and rushed to the door. When she opened the door, there stood Stephen, still as a statue, with his head hanging on his breast, and his basket beside him. She clasped him in her arms with joy, but he did not take *her* in his arms in return. He was cold and indifferent to her, and without saying a word he threw himself down on a wooden bench in the little kitchen, carelessly leaving his basket of glass at the door, which he had never done before. His good wife saw that he was in sad distress, and sitting down on the bench beside him, she took him in her arms again, and asked him anxiously what had happened to him, and why he was so sad. Still he said nothing, but sighed and groaned as if his heart would break. His wife became more and more anxious, thinking something very serious must have happened,

and continued to speak kindly to him, pressing him to tell her what was wrong. At last he did speak to her, and told her the whole story of the accident to his basket in the Giant Mountains, and about how he had meant to steal her goats, but found the goat-house empty. After hearing the story, the good wife, knowing that Number Nip had really meant good to Stephen, as well as to her and the children, by punishing him as he had done, could not help bursting out into a loud laugh. Stephen felt that it was very unlike his good wife to laugh at him in his distress ; and if he had been in his old rough mood, she would have suffered badly for it. But he said nothing, and merely asked where the goats were.

"The goats!" she said ; "I thought you would have asked about our dear children first. The goats are very quiet in the little park, and will not run away. Of course it was a bad trick which Number Nip played you, but who knows how soon he or some one else will do us a good turn, and perhaps even send us riches?"

"Riches!" he answered, quite in a sulky

mood, "he send us riches, the villain! You will wait long enough for riches either from him or from any one else."

"What is looked for last often comes first," she answered in very merry mood. "But why should we despair? Although you have no glass and I have no goats, still we have our dear children, and we have four stout arms between us. We can still work and get food and clothes somehow for our children and ourselves."

"You have no goats!" he answered; "if the goats are gone—stolen by some thief as I feared, you may drown your children, for without my glass I can do nothing for them."

"If you cannot I can, and I will," she answered.

As the good wife said that, the good priest, who had been sitting in a corner of the kitchen rose and came forward. He of course had heard all that Stephen and his wife had said to each other; and now he made a good kind speech to them. He spoke to Stephen about how very very bad it was to love money so much as he had done; and how money is the "root of

all evil," as the Bible says, when people love it too much ; and how his love for it had made him a rough bad man, and unkind to his good wife and children ; and how he had been punished so severely, just that he might learn to love money less, and to be good and kind to his wife and children. The big rough Stephen wept like a child at the good priest's kind words, and said to the priest that he now wished to be good, and to be kind to his wife and children ; and for the first time since he was married he took them in his arms, one after another, and kissed them affectionately.

This of course delighted the heart of the good priest, and he thought it was time now to tell Stephen of the good fortune that had come to his wife. So the good priest told the good wife to read aloud the letter which he had given her ; and Jane took the letter from her pocket and read it aloud. The priest then told Stephen that the money was safe in his strong iron box, and that his wife and children would always get enough to make them happy and comfortable, just as they might need

it ; and that he, too, would share in their happiness and comfort if he would learn to be good and kind, and would not be greedy and selfish any more. Stephen, as you may suppose, was astonished and bewildered at such wonderful news, and he did not know what to think or say. He did not ask where the money had come from, but he never afterwards said any bad things of Number Nip, although Number Nip had punished him so badly, and he never wished to have any of the money for himself. He was quite content that the good priest should keep it, and take care of it for his wife and children, and that he himself should share their happiness and comfort without getting any of the money.

Ever after that Stephen was a kind husband and a kind father. The good priest bought a little farm for Stephen and his wife with part of the money, and Stephen worked the little farm very diligently ; for although he had been a rough man when he was a glass-seller, he had never been a lazy man.

So Stephen and his wife and children

all lived and worked at the little farm very happily together for many a day ; and their friend the good priest managed the rest of the money for them with great care and honesty. When the good woman offered him some money at any time because she knew he was very poor, he just said, "No! no! my daughter ; the money was sent to you, not to me, and I am more than repaid for any trouble I have had by the little good that I have done you." But as he would take no money, the good woman offered him a present which he did take, and that was a grand new priest's robe, to wear in church on Christmas Day, and Easter Day, and other high days, when everything in church was grander than usual.

The good old priest was a kind and faithful friend to Stephen and Jane and their children so long as he lived ; and when he died, they all felt like orphans who had lost the best and the kindest of fathers.





VI.

THE COUNTESS AND LORD GIANTDALE.

THE Countess Cecilia was a famous and fashionable lady, and she had two beautiful daughters. The Countess had not much to do in her grand house, because she had so many people to do all sorts of things for her; and she was always thinking too much about herself, because she had so little to do. Whenever she had any slight pain or ache in any part of her body, she fancied herself ill. Once she fancied herself very ill, because she had many aches all through her body. She had aches in her fingers and aches in her toes, and aches in her ears, and I do not know what other

aches besides. The doctor did the best he could for her; but when he saw that his medicines could not cure all her aches, and that as soon as one ache was cured another came, he told her to go to Carlsbad, in Bohemia, and drink the healing waters there, as they would make her well if anything would. So she said she would go to Carlsbad; and when her two lovely daughters knew that she was going to Carlsbad, and that they were to go with her, they almost danced for joy. They had been at Carlsbad when they were little girls, and liked it very much; and as they had since grown to be young ladies, they were sure that they would like it still better now.

After everything was arranged for going to Carlsbad, the Countess was impatient to be off to get her aches cured, and the daughters were impatient to be off to see all the fashionable people who would be there, and to enjoy the promenades, and the balls, and other pleasant amusements that would be agoing. So the great old travelling-carriage was got ready, the strongest and steadiest horses were yoked to it, the Countess and her two daugh-

ters took their seats in it, the old postilion Carl got into his saddle, and the old footman Fritz got up on the box. When all was ready, the postilion whipped up the horses, and away they trotted. The roads were very bad in those days, and their badness often caused accidents to carriages. So an accident happened to the Countess's carriage just as it had reached a little village, in the afternoon of the first day of the journey. One of the axles broke, and another had to be got in its place. The village wright set to work to make one, but he told the Countess that it would not be ready until next morning; and she had no help for it but to stay in the village inn all night, which she feared would not mend her aches, as the beds looked hard, while the food did not appear so nice as she would have liked.

When Carl and Fritz were sitting in the kitchen of the inn, drinking a bottle of wine together in the evening, a tall and stout-looking man with a red beard happened to be sitting drinking beer at another table. Carl and Fritz talked mysteriously about Number Nip, and told each other stories which they had

heard about him before they had left home. The man with the red beard, after listening to their talk for some time, came to their table, and, sitting down beside them, joined in their talk. He appeared to take great interest in their Giant Mountain stories, and he told them many frightful things about Number Nip and his doings which they had never heard before. As they listened to these stories, and thought of having to cross the Giant Mountains next day after dark, the hair of their heads stood on end with fear.

Next morning the new axle was fitted into its place, and as the Countess was anxious to get on her journey, the horses were at once yoked to the carriage, and away it rolled. It was a long level drive, with nothing to interest the travellers by the way, until the Giant Mountains were reached. It was dark by the time they got to the mountains, and as the Countess and her daughters were tired with the long dreary drive, they had all fallen asleep. It was a lovely, quiet summer evening, and not a breath of air stirred the trees. The sky was clear, and the stars twinkled overhead, while the soft

light of the moon falling upon the hills and rocks and trees, made the whole mountain-side look like an enchanted scene in fairy-land. The mountains did not look dark and gloomy and terrible, as Fritz had expected ; but yet he was far from comfortable as he sat perched on the box, having nothing to do but to look about him as the carriage drove along. There were many fireflies flitting about, and with their fiery brightness they helped to make the beautiful scene look still more beautiful ; but Fritz did not like them. He was not sure that they really were fireflies. He feared they might be some of Number Nip's servants ; and one very bright one, which started from behind a bush just close to the horses' heads, he really thought for a moment was Number Nip himself. The terrible things which the red-bearded man at the village inn had told to him and Carl about Number Nip *would* come into his mind, and big drops of sweat *would* chase each other down his brow. Often he shut his eyes when he saw a rock or bush of strange shape. Now and again he whispered his fears to the postilion ; but the

postilion was too much taken up guiding his horses in the mountain-road, with all its ups and downs, and sharp turns round rocky corners, to look at odd shapes, or to think what they might be. At last one of the horses started, and the postilion muttered something hastily, which Fritz did not distinctly hear. After the carriage had gone a little farther, both the front horses started, and stopped. Fritz, in terror, shut his eyes, for he now feared the worst. The horses reared and kicked, and would scarcely go on; but the postilion, who was a good driver, managed to make them go on, although they, as well as Fritz, were now shaking with fear. But as Fritz's eyes were shut, he did not see how frightened the horses were; so, thinking all might be right again, he half opened his eyes, and took a hasty glance along the road; but, oh! horror! what did he see? A tall, black figure stalking slowly on some yards in front of the horses. The figure seemed to Fritz to be taller than a man, although it was somewhat like a man, with a great black cloak wrapped round it; but the most extraordinary thing about

its appearance was, that it had no head! "Carl, do you see that?" Fritz whispered to the postilion, scarcely able to speak.

"Yes, there is something there," replied the postilion; "but don't speak to me at present, for I can scarcely keep the horses on the road."

This, of course, added still more to Fritz's fears, for he did not like the idea of being tumbled, with the carriage, over a precipice, and getting his neck broken, any more than being carried off by Number Nip without a broken neck. At last, when he could not bear sitting silent longer with two such fearful dangers in the way, he opened the carriage window behind the box, and called to the sleeping Countess and her daughters, "There is something terrible in the way, and we are in great danger."

"Why do you disturb us? what do you want?" asked the Countess, as she started out of a dream.

"It is that monstrous figure walking there without a head," answered Fritz. "Just peep out, please your ladyship, and look at him."

"You stupid fellow, there are too many

men without heads, and you seem to have lost yours."

But the daughters, who awoke, too, at the sound of Fritz's voice, crept close to their mother, saying, "O mother, we are among the Giant Mountains. What if it should be Number —— ;" but they were too frightened to say more.

The old Countess did not believe in Number Nip, and she used to laugh at the stories which people told about him. So she said to her daughters, "O foolish girls, you are as bad as that old Fritz, who would be frightened at his own shadow in the moonlight. Surely you don't believe all the nonsense about spirits of the mountains and ghosts and other absurd fancies. Nobody ever sees such things, except the silly people who believe them. I don't believe in spirits and ghosts, and so I have never seen any." But the daughters only crept closer to their mother than before.

Fritz, on venturing to look again at the monstrous figure, now saw that it really had a head, but that it was carrying its head under its arm. When he saw this, he merely stared and gaped, and could not

speak a word ; and when his voice came back to him, he called through the window, in a very shaky tone; "O my lady, the figure has a head, but it is carrying its head under its arm!"

At this the young ladies screamed, and pulling down the curtains of the carriage windows, they hid their heads under their mother's cloak ; but just as the curtain of the front window was being pulled down, the Countess had for a moment caught sight of the figure in the moonlight ; and she saw as plainly as possible that it was walking along with its head under its arm. At the awful sight she threw herself back in the carriage, and pressed both hands firmly on her eyes.

Fritz could not now shut his eyes, and he could not help staring at the figure. To his great terror, he saw that it was gradually falling back, and coming nearer and nearer to him, at the same time making preparations as if it meant to do him some sudden mischief. Fritz now began to mutter prayers to the Virgin Mary, and to all the saints, to save him from the terrible danger ; but he had scarcely begun his prayers when the

monstrous figure took its head from under its arm, and threw it with great force at his head. It struck him on the forehead, and hurled him off the carriage. Almost at the same moment the figure took a great knotted stick from under its dark cloak, and dealt the postilion a blow which sent him headlong over his horses' ears to the ground. The figure then said, in a deep voice, as if speaking out of a grave, "Take that from Number Nip;" and seizing the reins, he leapt into the postilion's saddle, whipped up the horses, and made them gallop backwards and forwards on the road at full speed, at the risk every moment of dashing the carriage and the travellers to pieces over a precipice.

But this monster postilion was not long at this terribly dangerous work when a strange-looking man on a black horse came riding up alongside of the carriage; and although the black horse had but three legs, it did not limp, and, although the road was hard and stony, its feet made no sound on the road. When the mysterious postilion drove fast, the mysterious rider rode fast; and when the mysterious postilion drove slow, the mysteri-

ous rider rode slow. The mysterious postilion began to be afraid of the mysterious rider, and his fears so increased that he at last dropped the whip and the reins, and shook in his saddle like an aspen. Upon this the mysterious rider came close alongside of the horse on which the now terrified mysterious postilion rode, and in a strong clear voice he said to him, "Whither away so furiously, scoundrel without a head?"

At the sound of the voice, which was quite human in its tone, the terrified mysterious postilion pulled up his courage for the moment, and answered impertinently, "I drive after my nose ; how else should I drive?"

"Then we must see where your nose is going," answered the mysterious horseman ; and having said that, he immediately seized the reins out of the mysterious postilion's hands, put his arm quietly round his waist, lifted him from the saddle, and dashed him with great force to the ground. He then tore off his black cloak and a great mask which concealed his head. If Fritz and Carl, who were both still lying stunned where they fell, had been there at that moment, they

would have seen the same stout red-bearded fellow who had told them the terrible things about Number Nip at the village inn, kneeling at the feet of the mysterious rider's three-legged horse. The fellow, of course, knew that he had been found out, and he also knew that the mysterious rider could be no other than Number Nip himself, whom he had been trying to imitate. So he knelt there, and begged and prayed Number Nip to spare his life. "My good Lord of the Mountains," he said, "have pity on me. I am a miserable wretch, and have been very unfortunate all my life. I have tried many things, and have never managed to earn so much money as to buy sufficient food and clothes for myself. Everything has always gone against me; and now, in trying to act Number Nip, I have come to grief very sadly. Spare my life, good Lord of the Mountains, I beg of you, for it is really not all my blame that I am so bad as I am."

Number Nip was curious to hear the man's story of himself, and so he said to him, "Get up, fellow, and do as I bid you." The fellow jumped up and stood there rubbing

his bruised bones, and waiting for Number Nip's orders.

Number Nip then drew down his black horse's fourth leg, which had been stuck up to his side amongst his ribs, so that the horse had now four legs like any other horse. After Number Nip had done that, he went to the carriage door, and, opening it, spoke very courteously to the ladies inside; but the ladies did not answer. They had all fainted, and they lay in the carriage pale and still as if they had been dead. When Number Nip saw this, he filled his hat with clear cool water from a brook, and sprinkled it on the ladies' faces. That soon brought them out of the faint, and when they opened their eyes they saw Number Nip as a well-bred gentleman bowing politely to them at the carriage door. He then said, "I am truly sorry, ladies, that you should have been attacked and insulted while passing through my lands by a rascal in disguise, who no doubt meant to rob you. I am Lord Giantdale, and Giantdale is the name of my lands. My castle is near. You are welcome to rest in it for the night, and

to-morrow you may go on your way with more comfort."

The Countess thanked Lord Giantdale very much, and gladly accepted his kind invitation. Lord Giantdale then ordered the red-bearded fellow to jump into the saddle and drive the carriage along the road, which he said he would show by riding in front. So he rode on before, and Red Beard drove the carriage after. Red Beard noticed that many queer-looking creatures like bats, with leathern wings, came flying to Lord Giantdale as he rode along, and that they appeared to get messages from him, and then fly off, some in one direction and some in another. Red Beard did not like these mysterious-looking messengers, and feared lest the message-carrying should end in some mischief to himself.

The ladies in the carriage were looking out anxiously for Lord Giantdale's castle, and at last, after driving a good way through a thick wood and past many high rocks, they saw lights flickering through the branches of the trees. Immediately after, a troop of horsemen in armour, carrying flaming





torches, came riding up to them. The horsemen said they had come in search of their master, and that they had been anxiously seeking him ever since sunset. They turned with Lord Giantdale and the carriage, and very soon the carriage was driving in at the court-gate of a large and beautiful castle. The whole front of the castle was brightly lighted up, and even the Countess, who had seen many grand castles in her day, said she had never seen any castle so large and grand as that one. Lord Giantdale politely assisted the ladies out of their carriage, and led them into the great hall. The Countess looked round, and missing Fritz and Carl, she felt anxious for their safety. She told Lord Giantdale of her anxiety for them, and he ordered two of his armed horsemen to go at once in search of them, and to bring them to the castle. The two horsemen rode off as they were ordered in search of the two missing men.

Lord Giantdale then led the three ladies into the drawing-room, where there was a large company of very grand people. His lordship introduced the ladies to the com-

pany, and told the story of the strange adventure. The whole company appeared to be greatly interested in it, and for some time nothing else was talked of—every one saying how fortunate it was that Lord Giantdale happened to be riding past at the time.

After the ladies had rested for a short time in the drawing-room, Lord Giantdale brought a doctor to see them, saying they might require some soothing medicine after the terrible fright which they had got ; and when the doctor saw the ladies, he ordered each of them to have a glass of a pleasant reviving cordial wine. After drinking the cordial the ladies felt quite revived, and they became lively and cheerful. Supper time came soon after, and all the company went into the great dining-hall, and sat down at the supper-table. The long dining-table was covered with all sorts of the most delightful dishes, and the sideboard and side tables were loaded with gold and silver plate of wondrous beauty ; but there was nothing so surprised the Countess and her two daughters as the dessert. There were all kinds of fine fruits and sweets that you can

imagine ; but the most extraordinary thing about the dessert was that Lord Giantdale's confectioner had made a great many little sugar figures, which pictured out the whole story of the adventure that had just befallen the Countess and her daughters. There were little figures showing the carriage and the horses, and the postilion and the footman, and the Countess and her daughters, and the man without the head, and Number Nip on his three-legged horse; and all these figures were so arranged as to show everything exactly as it had happened, and all looked like real life. This amused and surprised the Countess and her daughters very much indeed.

The Countess was sitting at table next to a nobleman who told her he was a Bohemian ; and she asked him why Lord Giantdale was giving so very grand a feast that night. The Bohemian nobleman said that such a feast was nothing at all uncommon at Giantdale Castle, that the guests were some old acquaintances who had chanced to meet there by accident, and that Lord Giantdale was only showing his usual

kindness and attention to his friends. "I really feel quite bewildered," the Countess replied to the nobleman, "for although I have seen much in great houses, I have never seen anything like this until now, not even in the palace of the Emperor; and what puzzles me most of all is that I never heard of Lord Giantdale or his beautiful castle before, although I thought I knew every nobleman in Silesia." The Countess got into conversation with Lord Giantdale himself, who sat at her other side, and she tried to get him to clear up the mystery to her; but the more she talked with him the more completely puzzled she became.

As the conversation went on, ghosts and goblins and mountain spirits began to be talked about; and there was a fat, funny, round-faced priest who told amusing stories about Number Nip. Some said they did not believe a word of the Number Nip stories, or that there even was a Number Nip, while others said they quite believed the stories, and that there certainly was a real Number Nip, who had been often

seen among the mountains. The Countess liked that kind of talk above all things. She did not believe in ghosts or goblins, or in mountain spirits, or even in Number Nip, and she said that plain out. That shocked some of the company very much, as they thought that people, and especially ladies, who did not believe in such things must be very bad, and could have no religion. "Well," said the Countess, "what better proof could I have that there is no Number Nip amongst these Giant Mountains, than the adventure which has just happened to myself and my daughters? Had there been such a Spirit of the Mountains, he never would have allowed three helpless ladies to be attacked and nearly murdered by a scoundrel in disguise, pretending even to be Number Nip himself; and if by any accident he should have allowed such an adventure to happen, he would not have left it to any chance passer-by like you, my Lord Giantdale, to save us and to punish the scoundrel. No, no, I don't believe in Number Nip any more than in other goblins."

"I am sorry," Lord Giantdale replied to

the Countess, "that your ladyship would banish from the world so completely, all the spirits, good and bad, which people of every country believe in. What would become of our interesting nursery tales, and pleasant winter evening fireside stories, if there were neither ghosts nor goblins, nor wandering spirits in the world? and what would the people of Silesia do without that famous character, Number Nip, who is so good at punishing bad people and rewarding good people? You say you do not believe in Number Nip because he did not come to your help when you were in danger from a villanous scoundrel among his own mountains. But can you be sure that he had not something to do in saving you from the villain? You know he puts on all sorts of shapes, and can appear anywhere at any time. What would you think if it was he who put on my shape and knocked the scoundrel to the ground, and brought you to my castle? Do you think I could have left all my friends here to go scampering through the woods on horseback in the dark? What would my friends have

thought of it? They would certainly have said I was very unpolite if not quite crazed. Suppose I were to tell you that I have not been out of my castle since sunset, and that my friends were to tell you that I have been here with them all the evening, and that a stranger on horseback with a company of strange horsemen brought you to my castle door, and that neither he nor his horsemen have been seen since? What would you think then? Would you still say that the Spirit of the Giant Mountains is a mere fancy, and that there is no Number Nip, who helps the helpless, and who punishes scoundrels?"

While Lord Giantdale was saying this the Countess could not help noticing something strange in his face, which she had not seen before. She did not know what that something was; but she felt that she could not now venture to laugh at Number Nip stories, or even to say to herself that there was no Number Nip among the Giant Mountains. I do not know whether she had meant to say anything more about ghosts or goblins, or Number Nip, because Fritz and Carl were

just then brought into the room, that her ladyship might see that they were both safe and sound, and that her mind might beat ease about them. It was a great comfort to her to find her two old servants as well as if no accident had happened ; and she hoped that there was now nothing to prevent her from going on her journey to Carlsbad next morning. Fritz and Carl were delighted to see their mistress and her daughters alive and well, and in such grand and pleasant company ; and Fritz, for their amusement as well as for a bit of fun to himself, pulled from below his coat the head of the terrible dark figure which had knocked him from his seat on the carriage to the ground, and put it down, with a very serious face, on a great silver dish in the middle of the table, which had just been emptied of some nice dessert fruits. It was a very large turnip, which had been cut into a very ugly figure of a man's head ; and to make it look all the more like a head, a nose of wood, and a beard of hair, which had been cut from the tails and manes of the Countess's horses during the night they were in the village, had been stuck to it. The Countess

and her daughters, and all the company, laughed heartily at the ridiculous imitation of a head, and it was handed over to the doctor as a present, that he might either dissect it or put it into his museum of curiosities, as he might think best.

After some music and dancing, and other pleasant amusements, the ladies were shown to their bed-rooms, which, like everything else in the castle, were the grandest bed-rooms they had ever seen. The beds were delightfully soft, and they all slept soundly until the sun was high, and shining brightly in upon them next morning.

When they came to breakfast, Lord Giantdale very politely asked them, and, indeed, pressed them, to rest at his castle for some days; but the Countess had felt some of her old aches that morning on getting out of bed, and she was so anxious to get to Carlsbad to try its healing waters, that she could not be persuaded to remain even a day longer. So, immediately after breakfast, the carriage was brought to the door, and the ladies having got into it, away it drove for Carlsbad. Lord Giantdale mounted his black horse

and rode with his friends to the boundary of his great park. The Countess thanked him sincerely for his very kind attentions to her and her daughters, and on saying farewell to him she promised to visit him again at his castle on her way home from Carlsbad.

The Countess and her daughters got to Carlsbad safely on the evening of the day on which they left Lord Giantdale's castle. Next morning the Countess sent for the most famous doctor of the place, who was named Dr. Brunenfelt, and he very soon appeared. As he walked into the presence of the Countess, her ladyship was surprised to see that he was the doctor who had given her the cordial which had done her so much good at Giantdale Castle.

"Good morning, doctor," said the Countess. "I did not expect to have the pleasure of meeting you here. Why did you not tell me last night that you were coming? I would have been delighted to have given you a seat in our carriage."

But the doctor was more surprised than the Countess, as he had no recollection of ever having seen her before. "You are under

some mistake, Countess, I fear," he said, with a pleasant smile. "I do not think I have had the honour of meeting your ladyship before."

"Why, I met you at Lord Giantdale's castle last night," she said; "and that cordial wine which you gave me revived me in a most wonderful way."

"Lord Giantdale?" he replied; "I have not the honour of knowing that nobleman, my lady—indeed, I do not remember that I have ever heard of his lordship before."

"Most certainly it was you, doctor, and no one else, who gave me that wine last night; and both I and my daughters are extremely indebted to you for it."

Both Countess and doctor were equally puzzled. The Countess had no doubt at all that he was the doctor whom she had met at Lord Giantdale's castle, as his face, his voice, and his manner were all precisely the same. But the doctor felt just as certain that he had never, in all his life, either seen the Countess before or heard of her friend Lord Giantdale; and when he repeated this to her in the most courteous way, she thought it was all

out of extreme modesty that he did so, because she had offered him a fee for his attention to her and her daughters when at Lord Giantdale's castle, which he had very politely refused to take. So she now said to him, "Indeed, doctor, I know this is all out of excessive delicacy, because I offered you a fee last night, which you would not accept; but, although you would not take the fee, you must, at least, allow me to present you with this little trifle as a memorial of your great kindness to me and my daughters when we so much needed the help of a good doctor;" and while saying that, she put a beautiful gold snuff-box into his hand. The doctor now became satisfied that the lady was out of her mind; and, to please her for the time, he accepted the snuff-box, meaning to return it to her when she should be in her right mind again; for he had no doubt that the wonderful waters of Carlsbad, with his care and skill, would soon restore her to her perfect senses.

Dr. Brunenfelt was really an excellent doctor, and he knew well how to guide the patient in the use of the healing waters, and

how to keep the mind cheerful by every variety of pleasant talk when he paid his daily visits. He pitied very deeply the state of the Countess's mind, and he resolved to try his very utmost skill to make her well. Although the good, sensible doctor was not given to talking to other people about the complaints of his patients, yet, as he made his daily rounds, he could not help repeating to some of his other patients the extraordinary story of the Countess. But just imagine how greatly astonished those other patients must have been when, the first time they met the Countess on the promenade, she went up to them with a pleasant smile, and, mentioning their names, said, "So you have come on to Carlsbad too! You did not say, when I met you at Lord Giantdale's the other night, that I might have the pleasure of seeing you here."

"Pardon me," they would each reply, as she spoke to them, for every one knew who she was the second day after she came, "pardon me, Countess, but I cannot remember to have had the pleasure of meeting your ladyship before." They all thought

she had lost her wits, while she thought they had all agreed together to play off some trick upon her ; but why so many ladies and gentlemen of honour and good breeding should have planned anything so unbecoming she could not imagine. "Well," she at last thought, "it must be to give me some great and unexpected pleasure. Lord Giantdale himself will perhaps appear at the end of this little play which they are acting for my benefit, and certainly, to see his lordship's elegant form and bright face would be no little enjoyment." After thinking these thoughts, she resolved just to wait patiently, and to give up talking about Lord Giantdale and the pleasant party at his castle, although she still believed she had met all her new friends there before she saw them at Carlsbad. The last mention she made of Lord Giantdale's name was when she said to the Bohemian nobleman that she believed Lord Giantdale had come to Carlsbad with the rest of them, and that he meant to gratify her by throwing off his disguise in some unexpected way. "But why delay the pleasure intended for me?" she then added.

"Do beg his lordship to finish the play at once, and show himself. He would be quite a sun to our society here, bright as it now is without him."

This last mention by the Countess of Lord Giantdale and his party only made her new friends feel all the more sorry for her. The excellent doctor was specially sorry, as he had hoped that his anxious and skilful care, with the effect of the wonderful waters, would by that time have cured her, to some extent at least, of her craze. The curious thing about her case was that while she was still as crazy as ever about Lord Giantdale and his party, she was perfectly sensible and reasonable about everything else. Besides, the doctor's skill and the waters had cured her completely of all her aches and other ailments which her doctor at home had sent her to Carlsbad to get rid of.

After some time the Countess began to see to her great grief that her friends, and among them the excellent Dr. Brunenfelt himself, were in the belief that she was out of her mind about Lord Giantdale. To satisfy them that they were entirely mistaken, she invited

them all one evening to her rooms, and then told them the whole story of her adventure among the Giant Mountains from beginning to end. They were all much astonished indeed, and there was much talk about it. Some said that they were more satisfied than ever that she was crazed, and that the story was just wild fancy. Others said there was something in it, and that the story was not a bit more fanciful or wild than many things which they knew had happened among the Giant Mountains ; while many said it must have been all a dream which the Countess had dreamt while driving through the mountains asleep at night.

When the Countess saw, even after she had told the whole story plain out, that many of her friends, and amongst them the doctor, still thought her wits were astray, she gave up speaking about Lord Giantdale and the adventure among the mountains altogether. When the doctor saw this he was delighted, as he thought his very interesting patient had now got back her wits entirely, and was completely cured in mind as well as in body. He then talked proudly of the healing

power of the Carlsbad waters, saying there was nothing they could not cure, especially when the case of the patient was treated with sufficient skill and prudence. He told the Countess that as she had now been completely cured, she might leave Carlsbad; but he advised her to spend two months again under his care next season, so as to confirm the cure, and prevent the possible return of her illness. She was glad to think of returning home, and even her daughters were glad to think of home too, for, by the urgent advice of the doctor, they had remained until the very end of the season. No place looks more melancholy than a place of gaiety when the season is over, and the visitors are all packing up their luggage, and moving off in crowds.

So the Countess's luggage was packed, the great travelling-carriage was got ready, Carl jumped into his saddle, the ladies said a kind farewell to their good friend the doctor, Fritz got into his seat on the box—glad to think that the Giant Mountains would be crossed this time by daylight, Carl cracked his whip as no other postilion about Carlsbad could

have cracked it, and away trotted the well-cared-for horses with a good will, for they seemed to know that they were bound for home, and they, like the other visitors, were now quite tired of Carlsbad.

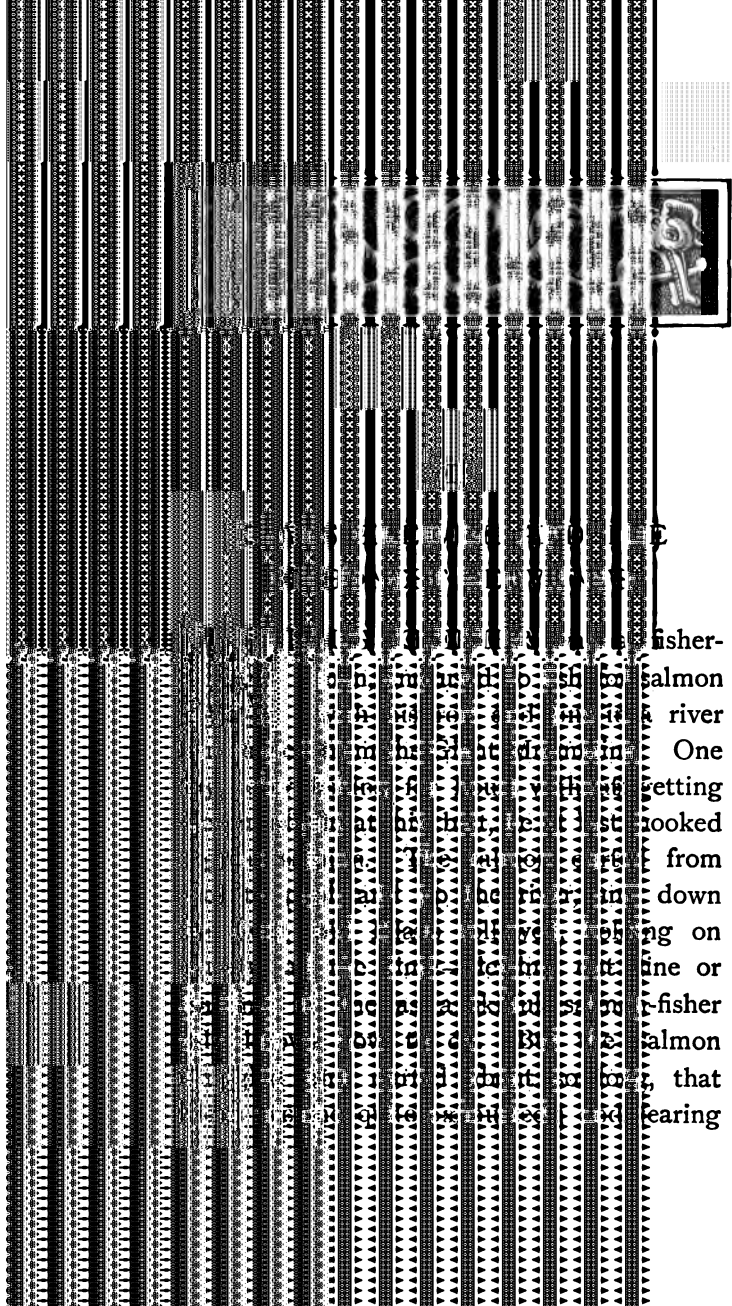
When the carriage reached the Giant Mountains, the Countess told the postilion that she wished to call for Lord Giantdale as she passed ; and she asked him to drive to the Castle by the long avenue which led to it through the park from the great gate on the high road. The postilion drove on and on, uphill and downhill, along the mountain-road, but nowhere could he see either the gate or the avenue or the park ; and indeed there was nothing all around but high hills and rugged rocks, and endless trees. The Countess and her daughters, as they looked out from the carriage windows, were greatly astonished, and felt quite bewildered. They thought they had somehow gone astray ; but both Carl and Fritz said they remembered the road well, and that indeed they could not have gone off it, as there was no other carriage-road through the Giant Mountains. The Countess asked every one they met about Lord Giant-

dale and his castle, but no one had ever heard of Lord Giantdale or of his castle ; and shepherds and hunters who knew every part of the Giant Mountains, said it was certain that there was no lord of that name who lived among the Giant Mountains, or anywhere near them, and that there was no such castle as the Countess told them she had seen. The Countess became satisfied that it was useless to search any longer for Lord Giantdale or his castle, and so she told Carl to drive on. Carl drove on as he was told, and the Countess and her daughters reached home towards evening of the second day after they had left Carlsbad.

The Countess used often afterwards to amuse her friends and visitors, by telling them the story of her adventure among the Giant Mountains ; and sometimes she spoke of it as a dream which she fancied she and her daughters must each have dreamt when driving through the mountains asleep at night ; and sometimes she spoke of it as a wonderful vision which they had actually seen with their eyes ; but at any rate she never again laughed at the stories which

people told about Number Nip, or about the spirits of the mountains, or of the waters, or of the air ; and when she spoke of such spirits herself, she always did so with a grave voice and serious face, as if they both saw and heard her, although she could neither see nor hear them.

But what more befell Red Beard ? He told Number Nip a long story about how he had begun life well with the help of a good father's advice, but afterwards had become dishonest and bad. He said he really had intended to rob the Countess ; and when his story was done Number Nip locked him up in the dungeon of Giantdale Castle. He went to sleep there ; and next morning he found himself in the prison of Hirschberg, from which he had escaped two days before. He then had time to think of all his bad ways, and to remember the good advice that his father used to give him. So he said to himself, " I will be honest and good in time to come ; " and when he got out of prison he learned to do honest work, and gave up all his bad ways.



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lest he should lose his prize after all, he called out, "I wish Number Nip were here to help me."

Klaus had no sooner said this than a respectable, grave-looking man, of about middle age, stood at his side.

"You have him," said the grave-looking man.

"That I have," answered Klaus, the salmon having stopped struggling; "he is certainly mine now."

"Don't be so sure of that," said the grave-looking stranger; "there is many a slip between the cup and the lip."

"Yes, no doubt," said Klaus; "but he will be a clever fish if he gets away from me;" and going forward to the place where the salmon was lying very quietly, he was about to lay hold of it, when it dashed away with great force once more, broke the line, and was free.

"Ha! gone, are you—and with my hook too?" Klaus called out in a tone of sad disappointment, looking after the fish as it swam into a deep pool on the opposite side of the river.

"Did I not warn you not to be too sure of your prize?" said the grave stranger; but Klaus was so vexed and disappointed that he took no notice of the stranger, and sat down on the bank to put a new hook to his line that he might try for another fish.

After a little silence, the grave man again said very gravely, "If I were you, friend, I would put down my rod and line, and in place of toiling some hours more trying to hook another salmon, I would lay hold of yon fellow as he lies quietly in yonder pool.

"I am not an otter who can swim across a broad river, or dive into a pool nine feet deep," replied Klaus, in a curt and impatient tone, without looking up, and still sorting at his line.

"If you cannot swim across, why not jump? Possibly you might not find the pool so deep as you think."

"Jump across!" said Klaus, almost in a tone of anger, for he thought the grave man was merely making fun of him, and of his failure to catch the salmon; "who could jump fifty yards?"

"I could," replied the grave man, in a tone as grave as before.

"You could?" said Klaus, looking up, with a sneer of contempt on his face; but what was his surprise to see the grave man make a sudden bound to the other side of the river, dive into the deep pool, jump on the opposite bank, and hold up the salmon in his hand, saying gravely, as he did so, "There, my friend."

Klaus stared in perfect bewilderment for a few seconds; then he threw down his rod and line, started to his feet, and bolted off as fast as his legs could carry him.

"Hillo! friend; where are you going so fast, and without your salmon, too?" the grave man called after Klaus from the opposite side of the river.

"Anywhere, to be out of your reach," Klaus answered, without stopping or looking behind him; but Klaus had not run far, when he felt his right arm in the grip of a very firm hand. He looked round, and, to his great terror, he saw that he was in the grave person's clutches.

"Why are you in such a fright? Why do

you run from me like that? Who do you suppose I am?" asked the grave person, in a voice that was not unpleasant, although still very grave.

"I believe," answered Klaus, "that you are no other than Number Nip, if not the very fiend himself; but if all stories about Number Nip be true, the one of you is as bad as the other."

"I should like to fall in with some of those ill-tongued rogues who talk so wickedly of me," said Number Nip; "and, as for you, I shall hang you up to the first tree, for believing such lies."

"If it must be, it must be," said Klaus, coolly; at the same time standing still, and beginning to loosen his necktie.

"What! you rascal; do you think I cannot hang you with your necktie on?" said Number Nip.

"I have no doubt you can, my Lord of the Mountains," replied Klaus, still quite coolly; "but it is an old custom in our country always to take the necktie off when such things are to be done, and I would not have it said, after I am gone, that Klaus

Kleimer, the fisherman, had forgotten an old custom even at the last."

"You deserve hanging for your coolness and impudence," said Number Nip, although he really was pleased with the poor man's coolness, and his love for an old custom; "but I want you to tell me why you were so vexed about the loss of the salmon when it broke from your line. Are you fond of dainty dishes? Did you mean to eat it all yourself?"

"No, indeed, I did not; I meant to eat none of it," answered Klaus.

"Then what were you to do with it?" asked Number Nip.

"I meant to carry it to the Baron's castle," answered Klaus. "To-morrow is Friday, and the Baron must always have salmon for his Friday dinner, however it is to be found."

"Then it was for the sake of the money you would get for it, that you were so anxious to catch it. Of course, the Baron would give you a good price for such a salmon as that," said Number Nip, holding up the salmon, which was a very heavy one, and a perfect beauty.

"Indeed," replied Klaus, "I would not have got so much money for it as would have kept my wife and children in food for two days!"

"What! is the Baron so hard with you as that? Does he not pay you fairly for the fish which you catch and sell to him?"

"Indeed, sir," replied Klaus, "no one will ever hear an ill word of the Baron out of my mouth. The Baron always pays well; but I don't get all the money he gives for the fish."

"Come now, be plain with me," said Number Nip, in a voice which showed that his anger was beginning to rise; "who gets the money, if you don't get it all?"

"That I will tell you truly," said Klaus, beginning to fear that the rising anger of Number Nip was at him. "When I take a fish to the castle, it is carried into the housekeeper's room. There it is weighed, and the price which the Baron has to pay for it is fixed. The money is then brought, and counted out in four little heaps. One heap is for the housekeeper, the second heap is for the butler, the third heap is for the cook and the footman between them, and the

fourth heap is for me. The Baron's servants say I ought to be thankful that I get so much, and they sometimes threaten to keep a part of my heap for the footman, to let the cook get the whole of the third heap."

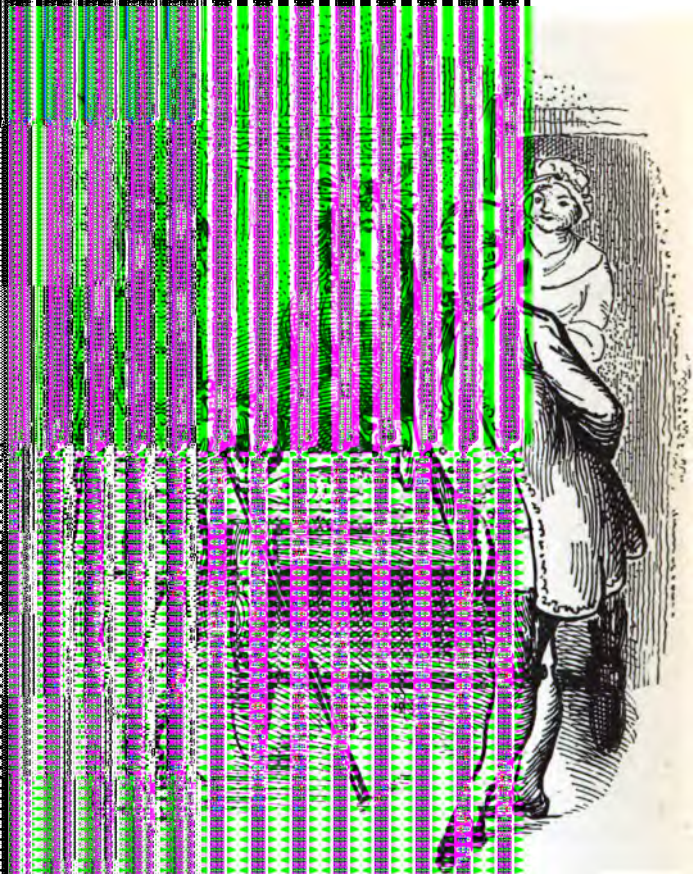
"The cheats! the thieves!" said Number Nip, in great anger; "I can scarcely believe such wickedness in servants."

"If you will give me the salmon to take to the castle, sir, and come along with me, you will see for yourself," answered Klaus.

"There is the salmon," said Number Nip, handing the fish to him; "take it to the castle, and I will go with you. If the story you have told me is true, you will have the pleasure of seeing the dishonest cheats well punished; but if your story is false, then I will certainly hang you on the nearest tree."

"I have no fear," answered Klaus; "you shall soon see that all I have said is true."

So they walked on together towards the castle, Klaus carrying the salmon just as he was in use to do. When they got near the castle Number Nip changed himself into a small blue fly, so that he might see all that would happen without being seen. When



Klaus entered the castle he went direct to the housekeeper's room to get the fish weighed, and the little blue fly went buzzing in about his ears, and flew up to a high pane of glass in the window to watch. The fish was at once weighed, and the money was brought and put down in four heaps. The housekeeper took one of the heaps, the butler took another, and the cook walked off with the third, to divide between herself and the footman, while the fourth was left for Klaus; and just as he was going away the cook called after him, "Next time I am to keep all the third heap for myself. You must give the half of your share to the footman; and you ought to be thankful for what you will get."

Klaus then walked away, and the blue fly went buzzing after him. When they got to the outside of the castle the blue fly buzzed and buzzed about in a furious rage, and it said to Klaus, "You shall soon see the thieves well punished. Stand at the window of the butler's room and watch."

So Klaus went to the window of the butler's room and watched. As he peeped in

at the window he saw the butler busy polishing a large silver teapot, while the footman was brushing hard at a pair of the Baron's top-boots, and he saw his little blue friend come buzzing in at the door and fly up into a corner. He listened, and he heard the butler and the footman disputing about an egg. The footman said that when an egg was to be eaten, it should be broken at the large end, while the butler said no, it should be broken at the small end, because there was only one skin under the egg at the small end, while there were two skins to break through at the large end. At this the footman laughed right out, and said, as if half to himself, "Such nonsense!" The butler, of course, was angry at that, and muttered without looking at the footman, "Impertinent fool; I will bray you in a mortar."

Number Nip had been watching from his corner, but now he came buzzing out of it towards the footman, and changing himself all at once into a large turnip, he went smash with great force against the butler's nose."

"You scoundrel! what do you mean?"

the butler screamed out in a rage, at the same time seizing the footman by the collar.

"Mean?" asked the footman in great surprise, when he saw what had happened.

"Yes, mean!" roared the butler in a fury.

"I did not do that," replied the footman, still in great surprise.

"Who did it, then? You threw the turnip. I saw you," roared the butler again.

"I did not," answered the footman, half trembling with fear and half laughing at the butler's bruised and bloody nose, which looked so ridiculous.

"And you dare to laugh at what you have done, too," roared the butler again. "I will teach you better; take that for your pains," giving him at the same time a terrible blow on the ear.

"And you can take that for *your* pains," screamed the footman, who was also now in a rage, at the same time hitting the butler on the mouth with his blacking-brush.

"You villain!" roared the butler, as soon as he got his mouth cleansed of the red and black mixture which the footman's brush had forced into it; I will crush the life out

of you ;" and with that he seized his heavy knife-cleaning board, and let it fly with all his force at the footman's head. The footman, fortunately for himself, saw it in time, and hastily stooped ; so that, in place of breaking his head, it broke a great hole in the plaster of the wall. As the footman stooped he found his blacking bottle ready to his hand, and picking it up, he sent it flying at the butler's head. The blacking bottle missed the butler's head, but it struck upon the wall close to where the butler stood, splashing not only the wall all over with the blacking, but also the butler's face and clothes. The butler, without a moment's thought, then threw the large silver teapot which he was cleaning at the footman ; and the footman, in return for the teapot, sent the heavy boot which he was cleaning at the butler. There was then a regular cannonade between the two, each seizing and throwing whatever he could lay hands on ; and when there was nothing more to throw, the butler rushed forward, and seizing the footman round the waist, threw him on the floor, and they rolled over and over, kicking and pulling and beat-

ing each other, and roaring and making such a hubbub that the noise was heard all through the castle. The cook ran from the kitchen, the housekeeper ran from the store-room, and other servants ran from other parts of the castle; all ran to the butler's pantry, pushing and upsetting each other on the way. The Baron's two daughters ran from the dinner-table to the stair-landing, and called down; but no one heard them or heeded them. The Baroness rose and rang the bell as loudly as she could, but no one answered. The Baron had his knife and fork ready to open a partridge-pie, the dish which he liked above all others; and there was nothing made him so angry as to be disturbed while eating his partridge-pie. He heard the noise and listened; and he put down his knife and fork after making just one cut on the crust of the pie. The noise died down for a little, and he took up his knife and fork, and had just stuck the fork in the breast of a fine plump partridge, when he heard the noise again worse than ever. He laid down the knife and fork once more, and pointed to the pie, and said, "Put

it to the fire." He then rose and walked out of the room and strode downstairs to the butler's pantry, making the stair shake with every step which he took. He looked so furious when he left the dining-room that the Baroness was in terror for the very lives of the servants who were making the ado. When he got to the door of the pantry he found it blocked up by the servants, who had rushed to see the battle. He did not say a word, but just pitched one here, and kicked another there, until he had quite cleared the door. He then saw the butler and the footman on the floor, rolling and tumbling and kicking, and calling each other very bad names. He at once made a sign to some stout workmen to come to him, and pointing to a water-cask which was standing by, nearly full of water, he said, "Lift." The workmen obeyed, and brought the cask to the pantry. The Baron then pointed to the two warriors, who were still tumbling on the floor without knowing that the Baron was there, and said, "Empty." The workmen immediately obeyed, and emptied the cask of water on the warriors. The war-

riors were at first stunned by the cataract which came roaring down upon them ; but they soon loosened their hold of each other, and started to their feet, looking like two half-drowned rats as the water ran from their hair and clothes upon the floor.

"What means this disgraceful conduct?" asked the Baron in a voice which made every one shake with terror who heard it.

"My lord," said the butler, "the footman hit me a severe blow in the face with a large turnip."

"My lord, I did not," answered the footman ; "and indeed there was not a turnip in the room."

"My lord, he did," replied the butler ; "and my bruised and bleeding nose proves it."

"Silence, both of you," roared the Baron in a voice of thunder. "Butler, show me the turnip, if there is one."

The butler searched for the turnip, but it could not be found.

The Baron then said in a still more terrible voice, "Take them to the prison-yard, and put them in the stocks."

Two of the Baron's stout men-at-arms

seized the criminals, marched them off to the prison-yard, and put them in the stocks. After that the Baron went back to the dining-room, and ate his partridge-pie in peace. All the other servants also went to their rooms or their work ; but when the cook returned to the kitchen, she missed the beautiful salmon which Klaus had brought. " Who has taken the salmon ?" she called out in a great fright.

" I did not, I did not," all the other servants who heard her said, one after another ; and on looking round in her anxious search for the salmon, she saw the Baron's great black hound just devouring the last fragment of it.

" There it is !" she said in a voice of agony and terror ; " what shall I do, what shall I do ? To-morrow is Friday, and the Baron must have fish. There will be nothing for me but the dungeon and bread and water for a month. Oh, help ! help ! who will now help me ? Where can I get another salmon ?" She then threw herself on the kitchen floor in despair, calling out, " I am undone, I am undone." When she was lying on the floor in that sad state, not knowing

what to think or to do, a stranger, dressed like a fisherman, walked into the kitchen, carrying a beautiful salmon in his hand.

"Here, my good woman," said the stranger, "why are you lying there roaring and groaning as if your last hour were come? Get up and buy this beautiful fresh salmon, which I have just caught in the river."

When the cook heard that, she started up at once. She seized the beautiful fish, and running with it to the Baroness, told her of the unfortunate accident which had happened to the first salmon, and begged her very earnestly to buy the new one to make up for it. "Oh! do buy the salmon, my lady," she repeated, "and save me from the Baron's wrath; for if he has not salmon for his dinner to-morrow, there will be nothing for me but the dungeon."

The Baroness was a kind lady, and was always glad to save her servants from the Baron's fury when they had done nothing very bad; and so she sent a message to the housekeeper, telling her to buy the salmon. The salmon was then weighed, and the housekeeper gave the fourth of the price

to the fisherman, and told him to be gone. The rest of the money was divided into three heaps, and the housekeeper having put her own share into her purse, left the room. She had scarcely left when in came the cook for her share ; and while she was in the room, in came the butler, with his broken face, and the footman behind him for their shares. The cook was much surprised to see the butler and the footman there, and she asked them how they had got out of the stocks. They said the housekeeper had let them out to get their money, but that they had to go back immediately to be put into the stocks again, in case of the Baron coming round and missing them. When the footman got his share of the money, he was quite delighted, and said, " The money has come just when I wanted it, for as soon as the butler and I are out of the stocks I will be able to buy from him a nice bottle of our master's wine, which he promised to take from the cellar and sell to me."

Soon after the butler and the footman left the room, in came the housekeeper again, while the cook was still there preparing to

carry off the salmon to the kitchen. "Where are the shares of the money belonging to the butler and the footman?" the housekeeper asked the cook. "I will take their money to them, poor fellows. It will help to comfort them while sitting sadly with their legs in the stocks."

"The shares of the butler and the footman!" said the cook in surprise. "The butler and the footman have just been here, and have got their money; and they told me that you had let them out of the stocks to get it."

"*I* let them out of the stocks!" the housekeeper answered in great surprise; "I did nothing of the kind. I believe you have taken the poor fellows' money, and have made up that story to screen your bad deed."

"I take their money!" the cook then screeched at the pitch of her voice; "do you dare to call me a thief? You can go to the butler and the footman yourself, and they will tell you that they have just been here, and have got their money. Be off, and take that for your impertinence." So saying, she let fly a brush which she chanced to have

in her hand at the housekeeper's head, but it passed over her and struck the wall.

The housekeeper, of course, could not stand that, and rushing forward, she seized the cook by the arm, and pulled her along towards the prison-yard, saying, "Yes, I shall go and ask the poor fellows; but you shall go with me and hear them call you an impudent thief, as you are."

When the two angry women had reached the prison-yard, they saw the butler and the footman sitting there with their feet firmly fixed in the stocks, unable to move. The housekeeper told them the cook's story about how they had already got their shares of the money, and they both said it was not true, as they had not been out of the stocks, and had not got a farthing of their shares.

"You hear what they say!" the housekeeper then screeched out. "Their money is in your purse, and you mean to rob the poor fellows of it."

"I have not the money," answered the cook in a great rage, and darted looks of fury at the housekeeper. Then a fierce war of tongues began between the two women ;

and while they went on shrieking out the most terrible words at each other, the men in the stocks called out again and again to the cook that she was a cheat and a thief, and that she deserved nothing less than the dungeon.

The Baron had just finished his partridge-pie when he heard the noise of this second war. Without saying a word, he rose again in great wrath from the table, and taking a bunch of large keys from a press in the wall, he walked with a firm and heavy step to the prison-yard. There the war of tongues was still raging between the two women. The Baron at once made a signal to some of his men-at-arms to step forward ; and the men-at-arms stepped forward. He then pointed to the women, who, in their desperation, had not seen him, and he said, in a voice which made all present shake with terror, and which put a sudden stop to the war, "To the dungeon ; bread and water for a month." "How many?" asked the men-at-arms. "All the four," replied the Baron. Both the women fell on their knees before the Baron, begging for mercy, and blaming each other

for what had happened; but the Baron would not listen, and merely said, in a still more terrible voice, "To the dungeon—away!" The men-at-arms obeyed, and marched off with the four criminals. The Baron walked with a stately stride in front of them, carrying the great keys in his hand. The dungeon was soon reached, the heavy iron door was opened, the criminals were pushed in, the heavy iron door was shut and securely locked, and away marched the Baron with the keys rattling in his hand.

Klaus, the fisherman, had been watching all the time, and saw everything that had taken place. When Number Nip came from the prison-yard, after seeing the criminals safely locked up, he found Klaus, the fisherman, tumbling and rolling on the grass in the flower-garden, and laughing until his sides were almost bursting.

"Well, my good friend," said Number Nip to him, "do you still think I favour cheats and rogues, and do harm to honest people?"

"No, good Spirit of the Mountains," answered Klaus, "I will never again listen to any one who says a bad word of you."

"Here, then," said Number Nip, throwing him some money ; "there is the price of the second salmon which I took to the castle, all except the cook's and the housekeeper's shares, which they managed to get. Take it, and buy bread to your wife and children, and be-gone."

"Indeed, kind sir, I am so exhausted with laughing that I am unable to get up."

"You had better try," said Number Nip, "for if the Baron finds you there, you will soon find yourself in the dungeon too."

But Klaus still continued to roll and tumble and laugh, when all of a sudden he heard a voice of thunder saying, "What villain is that spoiling my grass?" Klaus started to his feet, and seeing a tall stout man pointing a gun at him, he fled in terror. He dashed at once through the duck-pond, leaped a hedge, and found himself to the neck in a thick thorn-bush. He looked back, but the man with the gun was not to be seen, and he only heard a "Ha ! ha ! ha !" dying away through the wood in the distance. He now knew who it was that in kindness had frightened him to make him hurry out

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VIII.

ROLF AND THE PROFESSOR.

THE city of Hirschberg was at the foot of the Giant Mountains, and an old lady called Frau Ursula lived in the Great Square of that city. She had a nephew named Ludwig, and a niece, who was Ludwig's sister, named Meta; and they both lived with their Aunt Ursula. Ludwig and Meta's father and mother had died when the two children were very young, leaving them to the care of Frau Ursula, their aunt; and they also left all their money to Frau Ursula, that she might take care of it for the children.

There was a famous college, or Gymnasium, as it was called, in Hirschberg, with famous

professors in it for teaching young lads Latin and Greek, and many other things, to make them wise and learned. One of the professors of Hirschberg was named Professor Dunderdaf. When he was young he was quite a dandy; and even after he was getting old, and his hair and beard had grown gray, he liked to have his clothes and boots as neat as ever. Many young lads went from all parts of Silesia to Hirschberg to be taught by the professors there, and particularly by Professor Dunderdaf.

There was a tall, handsome, clever, sprightly young man, named Rolf, who lived with his father at a place named Bunzlau, in Silesia; and his father sent him to Hirschberg to learn Greek and Latin, and other wise things, from Professor Dunderdaf. Rolf was a far-off relation of Professor Dunderdaf, and Rolf's father thought that the Professor would perhaps be more attentive to Rolf because he was a far-off relation. Rolf was so clever that he soon learned nearly all that Professor Dunderdaf could teach him, and he even learned to know some things better than the Professor himself. The Professor did not quite like

that; yet the Professor was much talked of for his great learning all through Silesia, and many students came to his classes. One of his students, when Rolf was there, was Ludwig.

Now, Professor Dunderdaff's students did not like him because he was very strict with them. He always kept them in good order, and was very particular in making them learn their lessons well. Often they used to play tricks on him, which made him very angry. Rolf, although a clever learner, was quite as fond of playing tricks on the Professor as of learning his lessons. Ludwig and he had become great friends, and Ludwig was rather fond of tricks too, but not so good a learner as Rolf. One day, when they were sauntering out together for a walk, Rolf said to Ludwig, "I should like much to see our dandy old Professor in love with some young lady."

"Yes, it would be fun to see his stiff old joints bending and bowing and making themselves polite to a fair young beauty," answered Ludwig.

"I have thought of a plan," said Rolf, "to make him fall in love."

"Nonsense," answered Ludwig, "how could you make him fall in love?"

"I will write a letter to him," said Rolf, "as if from a young lady, and I will imitate a young lady's writing, so that he shall think the letter has been written by a lady. I will say that the writer of the letter admires him very much, that she is deeply in love with him, and that she likes, above all things, to see him when he is dressed in his finest clothes with a rose in his button-hole, and his handsome cloak over his shoulders. I will also make the writer of the letter say that she lives in the Great Square, and that it would please her greatly if he would walk in the Square every evening for half an hour, that she might have the pleasure of seeing him."

"That would be a dangerous trick, I fear," said Ludwig. "He would probably know your writing, however much you might try to make it like a young lady's writing. Besides, I do not believe that he would show himself off in the Square to please any young lady."

"I know the vain old dandy better than you," answered Rolf. "I am certain the trick would succeed, and it would be very amusing

to see him strutting up and down like a peacock."

Some of the other students were told of the proposed trick, and all agreed that it should be tried. So Rolf wrote the letter as he had proposed, and sent it to the Professor. "I am quite sure," said Rolf to Ludwig, after he had done it, "that he will be seen in the Square to-morrow evening dressed out a perfect dandy. I should like much to see him without the risk of him seeing me. Might I go with you to your aunt's house? We could all see him so well from the windows, and it would be such fun."

"I am sure my aunt would be delighted to see you, and my sister too," said Ludwig, "for I have often told them about you; but we must not tell them of our trick on the Professor—not at first, at least."

So it was agreed that Rolf should call next evening at Frau Ursula's house, when Ludwig would introduce him to his aunt and sister.

All the students who knew about the trick were very curious to see whether the Professor would really fall into the trap. Some said

he would, while others said he was not such a fool ; and there was much merry talk amongst them about it. When next evening came, Rolf, as agreed with Ludwig, called at Frau Ursula's house, and Ludwig introduced him to his aunt and sister. It was a beautiful evening, warm and quiet, and bright golden colours lighted up the clouds in the west as the sun was setting behind the Giant Mountains; and the clouds looked all the brighter from Frau Ursula's windows, because they were seen through the trees in the Square. Frau Ursula, Ludwig, Meta, and Rolf were all seated at the window talking pleasantly together, enjoying the beautiful evening—now watching the changing colours of the clouds, and now laughing at something amusing which they might notice in the Square. They had not been long at the window when they saw the Professor coming slowly along, dressed out to perfection, with a beautiful rose in his button-hole, and his gold-headed cane in his hand. "There is the old Professor," said Meta ; "and such a dandy too. Where can he be going to-night, or where has he been that he is dressed so

beautifully?" and the sprightly girl laughed aloud at the sight.

"Hush," said Aunt Ursula, "you forget, Meta, that the window is open, and the Professor is almost under it."

They all then drew back from the window, and spoke very quietly, so that the Professor should not hear them. The Professor continued to walk up and down the Square for a full half-hour, now glancing to one house and now to another as he passed.

Every day for nearly a week after the Professor came to the Square at the same hour in the evening, dressed out quite a dandy as before, and walked backwards and forwards, glancing now at the windows of one house and again at the windows of another, until he had looked at all the windows in the Square without appearing to find what he was looking for. Every evening Rolf was sitting at Frau Ursula's window with Ludwig and Meta, enjoying the cruel joke which he was playing off upon the foolish old man. The joke really was a cruel one, for Rolf continued writing letters to the Professor every day, as if from the young lady in the Square, who

still said she was deeply in love with him ; and the Professor not only came every evening to show himself off to her as she desired, but he also wrote affectionate and loving letters to her, addressing them to a house where she said she would get them, although she did not live there.

One evening, about a week after the Professor's walks in the Square had begun, he came as usual about the same hour, and that evening he passed and repassed Frau Ursula's house much oftener than he had done any evening before. Every time he passed he glanced up with affectionate looks at the windows. Frau Ursula had not been told of the joke, although Meta knew all about it soon after the Professor had begun his evening walks ; and so the Frau was not on the outlook for the old dandy as the three young people were. Frau Ursula, however, noticed him particularly that evening, and she said, " Dear me, the Professor has surely taken a fancy to our house to-night ; he has passed it so often, looking up to it every time. He appears tired, and no wonder, for it is very warm. He probably wishes to come in. We

must ask him. Go down, Ludwig, present my compliments to him, and say we would be so delighted if he would walk in and spend an hour with us."

Ludwig obeyed his aunt, and in a few minutes he returned to the house, bringing the Professor with him.

"I saw you were tired, Professor," said Frau Ursula to the old dandy, "and I do not wonder, after walking up and down there in a warm evening like this."

"Indeed, it is a very warm evening," replied the Professor, wiping the perspiration from his brow with a beautiful white silk handkerchief.

"If I were to make a guess," said Frau Ursula, "and if you had been younger than you are, Professor, I would have said you were doing penance up and down the Square at the bidding of some fair young damsel."

The Professor blushed to the ears and looked confused. He then said, "The truth is, I am not so old as some may imagine, and it is wonderful how the favour of a fair young charmer makes the heart beat again as in youthful days." As he said that, he looked

across to Meta, and then added with loving warmth in his tone, "*She*, I think, understands me."

This was too much for Ludwig, and with a burst of laughter he rose and left the room. Meta felt and looked confused, and hastily rising, she rushed from the room after her brother, almost exploding in a fit of laughter as she ran. Frau Ursula could not understand this, and she went after her nephew and niece to scold them for their rudeness, and to bring them back.

When all had gone except the Professor and Rolf, the Professor looked across to the part of the room where Rolf was seated, and now noticed him for the first time. "What, are you here, Rolf?" he said to him; "neglecting your studies, eh? Have you written that essay which I told you to write?"

"Yes," replied Rolf, "it is done; I shall give it you to-morrow."

"To-night," replied the Professor; "let me have it to-night, and that without fail." The Professor said that, thinking to get rid of Rolf, as he somehow felt very uncomfortable

at Rolf being there ; but Rolf, instead of getting up and going off to his lodgings to finish his essay, said, "It is ready ; it is in my pocket ; there it is ;" and taking a bundle of papers from his pocket, he handed it to the Professor without looking at it, thinking it was the essay.

"Let me see," said the Professor ; "it is in loose sheets ; I cannot take it in that way ;" and glancing at the loose sheets he soon saw that it was not the essay which he had got, but something which made him stare and look pale with rage. He twisted the loose sheets together, stuffed them into his coat pocket, and taking his gold-headed cane and hat, he walked off in great indignation without saying a word.

Rolf at once saw that he had made a sad mistake, and he was in a great fright at what might happen. In place of handing the essay to the Professor, he had given him the whole bundle of love-letters which the Professor had written to him, in answer to the letters which he, as a young lady, had written to the Professor. The Professor, of course, at once saw that a cruel trick had been played on him,

and that was why he walked off in such a rage. He passed Frau Ursula and her nephew and niece on the stair-landing without taking any notice of them, and they saw that he was in a towering rage. Frau Ursula rushed into the drawing-room, where Rolf was standing pale and almost unable to speak. "What is the matter?" she anxiously asked. "What has happened to the Professor, and what has happened to you, Rolf?"

"The letters!" Rolf repeated, in a low voice; "he has got all the letters."

"What letters?" asked Ludwig.

"His letters to me—his love-letters. I gave them to him in a mistake for my essay."

Ludwig laughed right out at the absurd mistake, saying, "Capital! What a delightful end to the joke!"

But Meta did not laugh. "Ah! what a misfortune," she said earnestly, with tears in her eyes. She feared the wrath of the Professor might be serious to Rolf; for she had become much interested in the gay and light-hearted Rolf from the time his visits to her aunt's house had begun, and Rolf had become quite as much interested in her.

The aunt was bewildered and perplexed. She first looked to the one and then to the other, not knowing what to think. "What is all this about?" she anxiously asked. At last, after a good deal of mystery about the joke, they explained it all to her. She was, of course, very angry, saying that it was shameful and heartless; and after the well-deserved scolding which she gave the three young people, they did all feel very much ashamed of their conduct, and were really sorry for it.

Frau Ursula was much vexed that such a thing should have happened in her house, and so she called for the Professor next day, and told him how vexed and sorry she was. When the Professor heard the whole story from Frau Ursula, he said he would forgive Ludwig and Meta, because they had been led into it by Rolf, but that Rolf must be punished. Frau Ursula, to please the Professor, said she would tell Rolf that he must never enter her house again. She also said to the Professor, to please him still more, that she trusted that what had happened would not prevent him from favouring her

and her nephew and her niece with a friendly visit at a time. All this pleased the Professor very much, and he began to think that if, in his visits to Frau Ursula's house, he should be particularly attentive and loving to Meta, she might consent to marry him ; for he now really wished to get a kindly blooming young lady for a wife.

When Frau Ursula went home from her visit to the Professor, she found Rolf still there. She again scolded him well for what he had done to the Professor, and told him with a severe frown on her face, that he deserved to be well punished, and that he must on no account enter her house again. Both Ludwig and Meta were very sorry for this, but they never dared to say a word against any of their aunt's orders. Rolf at once rose, said good-bye to Ludwig and Meta, and with a sorrowful heart left the house.

The Professor of course could not pass over Rolf's conduct, and so he resolved to punish him severely. The first thing he did was to tell the other Professors in the Gymnasuim of his conduct ; and they all agreed to put him away from the Gym-

nasium ; and so that was done. The next thing the Professor did was to write a letter to Rolf's father, telling him of his son's bad conduct ; and he said so many severe things in the letter about Rolf, that Rolf's father thought his conduct was a great deal worse than it really was. Rolf's father was of course very angry with his son, and indeed he was so angry that he stopped sending him any money. This of course made Rolf very miserable. He did not like the disgrace of being put away from the Gymnasium, although he felt that he had already learned nearly all that the Professor could teach him. After a few days he did not mind much being told not to go back to Frau Ursula's house, as he met Ludwig and Meta every afternoon in his walks ; but the want of money was very hard to bear. He had paid his last week's lodging to the good woman whose house he lived in ; and as he had no money to pay for another week, he honestly told her he had none, and asked if she would trust him ; but she had heard that he had been put away from the Gymnasium, and said "No." So he had no

help for it but to leave his lodging, without knowing where to go. That afternoon he met Meta in the city gardens, and sitting down beside her in a shady bower where they thought nobody would be passing to hear them, he told Meta the sad story about having no money, and about leaving his lodging without knowing where to go. Meta wept for sorrow at the thought of his sad state. "Never mind," he said to her, "I still have your brother Ludwig's friendship and your love, and I will be happy whatever may come. Besides, I know that when I can see my father and explain everything to him, he will forgive me, and all will be right with him again."

"I am so sorry and vexed about you, dear Rolf," said Meta; "and I am so angry at the old Professor for bothering me so much; and I am angry with my aunt for always saying he is welcome, and asking him to come back."

"Do not trouble yourself about the old Professor," answered Rolf; "I will be true to you whatever happens, and I know you will be true to me."

"Yes, dearest Rolf, trust to me entirely, for I will be true to you for ever. But it is annoying to be teased by the old Professor, who is always asking me to marry him when he gets a chance; and whenever he calls at our house, my aunt insists on my being in the drawing-room. Oh! I wish Number Nip would carry him off, or help me to get rid of him somehow."

While this talk was going on, there was some one amongst the bushes listening, although the lovers did not see him; and that was Number Nip. He had come wandering down from the Giant Mountains to amuse himself watching the people about the city, and to find out whether there were any honest folks in need of help, or bad people who deserved to be punished. When he heard the talk of the two lovers, he said to himself, "Here are two fools, I believe, but I will listen to them." After he had listened and heard all their talk, which I have just written down for you, he said again to himself, "I must see more of them, and I must see the Professor and the aunt too. I like their promise to be true

to each other, and I may help them if I find they deserve it."

When Number Nip had said that to himself, Meta heard the town-clock strike eight, and she jumped up from her seat all of a sudden, and said, "I must now run home ; my aunt will be wondering what has become of me. Farewell, dear Rolf, we shall meet soon again."

"Farewell, my darling," said Rolf, "I hope we shall meet to-morrow."

Meta then burst away from him, and ran home as fast as her feet could carry her. Rolf also rose and walked away into the streets of the town, without any thought about where he was to get supper or to sleep ; and Number Nip followed in the form of a favourite black hound which Rolf had lost, but which he was glad to see now turn up again all of a sudden. Rolf wandered on until he came to the butcher-market, but most of the stalls were empty by the time he got there, and the people who kept them were shutting up for the night. He came to one stall where he saw some odd ox tails with the hair on them, and

some odd ox feet with the hoofs on them. When he saw these, a thought came into his mind about what he should do. "I will buy an ox tail and a pair of ox feet," he said to himself; and he then said to the man at the stall, "I want an ox tail and a pair of ox feet—the blackest you have. What is the price of them?"

The butcher was at first astonished to see a well-dressed young man wanting to buy an ox tail and feet; but after thinking a little, and looking at Rolf, he said to him in a quiet whisper, so that his neighbour butchers might not hear, "I will give you what you want for nothing, if you will promise to come back and buy all my ox tails and feet, when your master wants them for his new medicine; and here is a dollar for you to the bargain, that you may treat yourself to a good supper to-night." So saying, he put a golden dollar into Rolf's hand.

Rolf did not at once understand what the butcher meant; but soon he remembered that a famous doctor in Hirschberg had said that he had found out a way of making a new medicine from ox feet and tails which

would cure all kinds of diseases ; and when Rolf remembered that, he knew that the butcher had mistaken him for one of the doctor's students who had been sent by his master in search of ox feet and tails.

Rolf very thankfully accepted the ox tail and feet for nothing, as he had no money to pay for them, and also the golden dollar, as it would get him his supper and his bed. He put the ox feet and the tail under his cloak, and walked away. As he went along the street, he came to an inn, called "The Golden Cross ;" and there was no inn in Hirschberg which people spoke so well of as The Golden Cross. The landlord of the inn, who was named Carl Kreutzer, was an honest man, and his wife, Katrine, was an excellent cook ; so that The Golden Cross was always well filled with respectable visitors. When Rolf looked at the windows of The Golden Cross he saw that they were all lighted up, and from that he knew that he was yet in time for supper. He walked up to the door, and knocked. The door was soon opened by a waiter, and Rolf asked, in a clear strong voice, if he might have supper and

a bed. The landlord, Carl, was in the hall at the time, and heard the voice. He looked round, and seeing that the visitor had the air of a gentleman, and that he had a grand cloak hanging from his shoulders, such as none but gentlemen wore, he hastened to the door, and begged him to enter. He then seized a couple of wax candles, and, with a waiter and a porter and Rolf's black hound following, he showed him into a large, elegant room. Rolf, as if very tired, threw himself on a sofa as soon as he entered the room, and merely said, in a somewhat commanding voice, "Supper," while the black hound lay down quietly on the floor in front of the sofa.

The landlord, thinking Rolf must be some great man, who had plenty of money, hastened away to order supper, and the waiter hastened after him; but the porter remained to help the great man off with his boots, and seizing a boot he began to pull. Rolf, however, without saying a word, gave him a kick which sent him to the other side of the room. The porter did not venture again to offer the great man help; but

gathered himself up, and bolted out at the door, after the landlord and the waiter.

Supper was soon ready, and the landlord and the waiter came to set it, and to help the great man to eat. When they entered the room, they found the great man still lying on the sofa, with his cloak wrapped about him, and the black dog still on the floor beside him. Many tempting dishes of Katrine's most careful cooking were put on the table, and a bottle of rich red wine, brought by the landlord from his cellar. Rolf, who had not known an hour before where he was to get even a crust of bread, was not a little pleased. When he saw everything ready on the table, he waved his hand, and said, "Begone!" So the landlord and the waiter at once left the room, and shut the door, wondering how the great man could eat his supper without their help. When they had left, Rolf got up, laughed heartily to himself, patted his black hound, sat down to his supper, and enjoyed it very much, giving the hound a tit-bit now and again. The bottle of wine he found to be good, and it put him in excellent spirits.

After his supper was finished, Rolf wrapped his cloak carefully about him, with the two ox feet and tail under it. He then rang the bell, and up came the landlord and the waiter. When the landlord opened the door, Rolf merely said, in a clear, strong voice, "Bed."

"Yes, sir ; come this way, please," said the landlord, bowing very respectfully ; and he walked away, followed by Rolf and the dog, and the waiter, and the porter, who now appeared again, to the best bed-room in the house.

"There, sir ; I hope you will be comfortable," said the landlord, setting down the wax candles on a white marble toilet table, where they were reflected from a beautiful large mirror in a bright gold frame—such, indeed, as could not be seen in any other bed-room in Hirschberg. Rolf threw himself on the couch, and the porter, anxious to do his duty, laid hold of a boot again ; but again he got a kick which sent him sprawling to the middle of the room. He quickly got up, and ran from the room, shutting the door behind him. He was no sooner gone than Rolf

burst into a loud fit of laughter, which rang all through the house. The landlord, of course, heard it, and he was greatly puzzled to imagine who this extraordinary visitor could be. The visitor was so silent before, and now he was so merry all by himself. The laugh had a queer ring in it, too, the landlord thought, and he said to himself, "He looks a most respectable gentleman, and I trust all is right. But we never can tell what may happen; we are so near the Giant Mountains."

Rolf went to bed and slept soundly until the sun was well up in the sky next morning. Before he had put out his candles at night, he saw his black hound comfortably rolled up and asleep under his bed; and he found him there next morning when he awoke looking as if he had never stirred. Yet the hound had paid several visits through the town during the night, while Rolf was asleep. Possibly one visit was to Meta, which comforted her with a hopeful dream; possibly another was to the Professor, which made him feel in his sleep that his courtship of Meta was not to go on so smoothly

as he wished ; and possibly a third was to Frau Ursula, which made her start out of her sleep in a nightmare bewilderment.

Rolf got up after he awoke, and rang the bell, but jumped into bed again, taking the two ox feet and the ox tail with him. When the waiter came to see what he wanted, Rolf called out "Breakfast," and at the same time showed a black hoof sticking out from below the bed-clothes. The waiter saw the hoof, and fled from the room in terror, nearly upsetting everything and everybody in his haste to get safely into the kitchen.

"What is the matter?" asked the landlady, "you fly as if Number Nip were at your heels."

"It is Number Nip, or some one worse," he said ; "I saw his black hoof."

"You crazy fool," said the landlady, "your head is turned this morning. What did the gentleman want ?"

The waiter could not tell what he wanted, as the sight of the hoof had so frightened him that he did not hear Rolf say "Breakfast."

"Go back," said the landlady, "and see what he wants."

But the waiter refused to go. In a few minutes the bell rang again, and the landlady calling another waiter, told him to answer the bell. He went off at once, laughing at the first waiter for his foolish fancy ; but when he entered the room he saw to his horror two black hoofs sticking out from below the bed-clothes, and as he stood for a moment unable to move, or to take his eyes off them, the black hound gave an angry growl from below the bed. Fear of the hound's white teeth, which he showed as he growled, broke the spell, and the second waiter, flying from the room in greater terror even than the first, rushed into the kitchen with a face as pale as death, unable to say a word.

"You next!" said the landlady to him in much surprise and anger. "What is the matter? What does the gentleman want?"

"Two black hoofs," the second waiter gasped out, but could say no more.

"Two black fiddlesticks," said the enraged landlady. "Go back and ask what the gentleman wants. It shall never be said of The Golden Cross that visitors to it are not properly attended to." But the second waiter

threw himself on a seat in the corner of the kitchen, and from that he would not move.

The bell rang again very violently. "*Some* one must go to the gentleman's room," said the landlady in a tone which showed that her anger was now rising to its height ; and turning to her husband, the landlord, who happened to come into the kitchen just then, she said in a very firm voice, which the husband felt must be obeyed, "Carl, *you* must go."

"Black hoofs in the best bed in the house," muttered Carl half to himself ; "I cannot stand that."

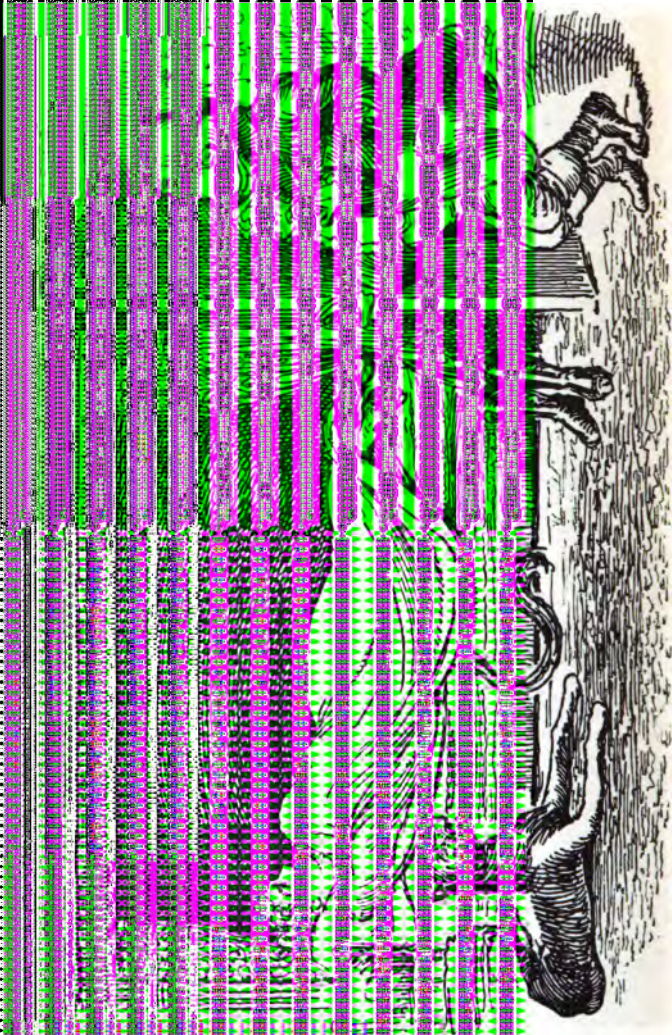
"No ! nor can I stand this nonsense about black hoofs," said the landlady ; "be off at once, and attend to the gentleman."

"Yes, yes, I am going," answered the landlord, his voice beginning to shake ; "but I must tidy myself a bit ; I will be ready in a moment."

"Go at once," answered the landlady in a very commanding tone indeed ; "tidied or no tidied, the gentleman's bell must be answered."

The landlord felt that it would be dangerous to delay any longer. So he hastily put on his coat and left the kitchen, making a quiet sign to the servants there to follow him. He walked along the passage and up the winding stair to Rolf's room very cautiously—anxiously looking behind him as he went to see that the servants were following. The servants followed in a crowd at a little distance,—all except the two waiters who had got such a fright. Carl went slowly on, until he came to Rolf's door. There he stood for a minute until the crowd of servants should come close to his heels. While he stood, the bell rang again more furiously than ever, on which the landlady came rushing to the foot of the stair, and called up, in a towering passion, "Carl, open the door at once, or *I* will come." Carl obeyed, and opened the door at once. As he did so, the crowd of servants peeped cautiously over his shoulders and under his arms, trying to see, with safety to themselves, whether there was anything wonderful in the room. But as soon as the door was open, Carl saw something both wonder-





ful and terrible in the bed ; for not only did he see the two black hoofs, but he also saw a long black tail lashing itself backwards and forwards from under the bed-clothes, while the stranger still lay in bed. At the same time the black hound started from under the bed and bounded forward with a very fierce growl. That was quite enough for Carl and all his crowd of servants. Carl screamed out at the pitch of his voice, "It is the Evil One himself!" and, as he turned to fly, he upset the porter and the groom, and the porter and the groom upset two housemaids and the kitchen-maid, and they again upset others behind them, so that, for a few seconds, Carl and all his servants were tumbling and scrambling in the passages ; but, getting on their feet as quickly as they could, they all rushed helter-skelter downstairs and on towards the kitchen. Into the kitchen they poured like a headlong torrent, upsetting the landlady, who was standing in the kitchen door, as they passed. This roused the fury of the landlady into a perfect storm. As soon as she got up she called out in fierce anger,

"You are a parcel of miserable cowards—all of you ; and you, Carl," she shrieked out to her husband, who was standing trembling in a corner, "you are the most cowardly of all. It shall not be said of The Golden Cross that a respectable gentleman could not get his breakfast, for that is what he wants, I believe. It is ready, and I will take it to him myself." So, without another word, she arranged the stranger's breakfast nicely on a tray, and marched boldly upstairs with it. When she entered his room he was dressed and sitting at the table. He rose and said good-morning to her very politely, while she put the breakfast on the table before him. He at once began, saying he was hungry, as he had waited so long ; and the black hound rose and looked at him, wagging his tail, as much as to say he was hungry too. The landlady, while setting the breakfast, took a hasty glance under the table, and while tidying various things about the room she managed also to glance into all the corners, but she saw no appearance of black hoofs or a black tail. She did see the stranger's tall black boots standing at

the side of the bed, and she noticed when the hound wagged his tail that it was long and black. She felt satisfied that it must have been the gentleman's boots and the hound's black tail that had so frightened her husband and the servants, and that the black hoofs had all been in their own imagination. So when she went back to the kitchen, and told them that she had seen nothing more terrible than the gentleman's black boots and the dog's black tail, and that they could not have seen anything more terrible either, they did not know what to think of it. The landlord, however, still believed that there was something wrong, and muttered to himself that the Evil One was able to change himself when he chose, even into an angel of light. His wife heard what he said, and told him that there must be no more of such nonsense at The Golden Cross, as she would not have such things said of respectable visitors.

The servants were just leaving the kitchen for their work in different parts of the house, and the landlord was moving away to his office to look after his accounts—

but scarcely knowing what he was doing or where he was going—when a very grand carriage drove up to the door. This was the carriage of the Countess Leichtenstein. As the Countess stepped from her carriage, she said she wanted rooms in the inn for some days. The landlady was at the door in an instant, and all the servants were set astir through the house to prepare for her ladyship. While this stir was going on, Rolf walked quietly downstairs with his hound, almost unnoticed by any one. He found his way to the little office where Carl, the landlord, was at his accounts. “Good-morning,” said Rolf to the landlord very politely. The landlord had not seen him as he walked in, but when he heard his voice he looked up and started to his feet. “Good-morning,” Rolf repeated, “I have come to pay my bill ; how much do I owe you ?” “No—no—nothing,” repeated the landlord in great fear, and shaking all over. “I am, we—we—well paid with the honour of yo—yo—your company ; I will take no money from you.”

“Oh ! I cannot think of going without

paying for what I have had," answered Rolf, and held out the money to the landlord, but the landlord drew back, and said,

"No, indeed, I will not take a farthing from you. I cannot take money from ——." He did not say more, but merely drew as far off from Rolf as he could.

"You cannot take money from *me*?" asked Rolf. "Who do you suppose I am?"

"Oh! you are a gentleman; but I cannot take money. No, no, I will not take it."

"Very well," said Rolf, very much amused at the landlord's fright; "if you will not take what belongs to you, I cannot help it, and all I can do is to thank you very kindly for your attentions to me. I have been extremely comfortable, although a little later than I like in getting breakfast. Good morning; but next time I spend a night in The Golden Cross, I trust you will think more of yourself, and take what is due to you." Rolf then walked away with his black hound following him; but, to ease the mind of the landlord about the black hoofs and tail, he left the ox feet and the tail in his bedroom. Whether the landlord was ever satis-

fied that they had really belonged to an ox I do not know; but I have no doubt that the sensible landlady made them into excellent soup for the Countess Liechtenstein.

After Rolf left the inn he walked on through the streets, and out into a quiet country lane to breathe the fresh air; but on looking round after he had got into the lane, he missed his black hound. He called and whistled, but the hound did not come. He had not stood calling and whistling there long, however, when two of the city Bailiff's officers came running up to him, and seizing him by the collar, called out, "We have the thief." Other officers soon came to help, and they marched Rolf off to the city, and took him before the Bailiff. You can fancy Rolf's surprise when he found himself thus seized and carried off so suddenly. He told the officers when they seized him, that it was all a mistake, as he was no thief, but an honest man. Yet they would not listen to him, and only said they must take him to the Bailiff. When he came before the Bailiff he said again it was a mistake, and that if the Bailiff would send to Professor Dunder-

daf, the Professor would tell who he was, and that he was an honest man. But just as he had said that, a very respectable, grave-looking person stepped forward and said that the young man had stolen his purse, and that if his pockets were searched, it would be found. The Bailiff then ordered Rolf's pockets to be searched, and a purse was found. Rolf said the purse was his own, and that there was just one golden dollar in it, but when the money was shaken out, more than twenty bright gold pieces fell on the table.

"Yes, that is my purse and my money, which that young man stole from my pocket," said the grave, respectable-looking stranger.

Rolf, of course, said that he did not steal the purse, and that he did not know how it had got into his pocket. But the Bailiff said it was quite clear that he must have stolen it, and that as Professor Dunderdaf had said that he knew the lad, although he would not interfere in the business, he had no help for it but to condemn Rolf to suffer as a thief, according to the laws of Hirschberg. So Rolf

was condemned to death and sent to prison in chains.

All this had happened to Rolf so suddenly, and had passed so quickly, that when he found himself alone in his prison-cell, scarcely able to move from the weight of his chains, he could not at first bring his mind to think that all was real. He pinched himself, and knocked his head against the wall to find out if possible whether he was not in a nightmare dream, or only saw some terrible vision; but the more he pinched and knocked, the more the feeling came on him that it was all too real, and that to-morrow morning, when led out of prison, he would see the bright sun for the last time. While these awful thoughts were passing in his mind, he felt a puff of smoke blown suddenly into his face; and on turning round he saw the respectable, grave-looking person, who had said he had stolen his purse, standing beside him, coolly smoking a cigar.

"So you are to suffer to-morrow morning as a thief, my young friend," said the grave-looking person.

"So it seems," replied Rolf, trying to ap-

pear as cool as the grave-looking person himself ; "but I did not take your purse. Some one must have put it in my pocket."

"*I* did," said the grave-looking person, still smoking his cigar.

"*You* did !" answered Rolf, in great anger ; "and you have dared to tell lies about me in Court, and to bring me to this. If my hands were only free of these chains for half a minute, I would make every bone in your body pay for the lies you have told."

"That would not be easy, my young friend," said the grave-looking person, as coolly as before ; "but tell me now, suppose you were to get out of prison, and escape the punishment which you deserve for your follies, would you ever again act the idler, and neglect your lessons ? Would you ever again play off cruel jokes upon learned Professors ? Would you ever again deceive and frighten the inhabitants of respectable inns, passing yourself off for *me* or for some one else much more to be feared ? Would you ever again insult *ME*, as you have done, by doing such tricks for your own amusement as I often do to punish bad people for their bad

deeds? You agreed with Meta in wishing my help. Now that you are in so bad a way for to-morrow, what say you?" Rolf threw himself at the feet of Number Nip—for of course the grave-looking person was Number Nip. "Mercy, mercy, Spirit of the Mountains," he said very earnestly. "I am truly sorry for my follies. Only help me now, and I will be careful in time to come."

"Well, then, I will help you now, for you really meant no ill in all you did," said Number Nip. "There is your way;" and as he said that, he took his half-burned cigar from his mouth and threw it against the wall of the cell. As soon as the cigar touched the wall a door opened in it to the outside. The chains at the same time fell from Rolf's feet and hands, and he was free.

"Away, escape for your life," Number Nip then said. "Go home to Bunslau, and explain everything to your father. He will believe you, and forgive you. On the third day after this you will return with your father and mother to the top of the Rosenberg. Enter the chapel there by the east door, and be in front of the altar at twelve

o'clock noon precisely. Something will then happen to you which you will never be sorry for."

Rolf seized Number Nip's hand, and kissed it warmly, while tears of gratitude ran down his cheeks. He could only say, "Thank you, thank you ; I will do what you say."

"But be off—stay not a moment longer," said Number Nip ; and Rolf rose from his knees, passed out at the opening in the wall, and disappeared in the darkness.

After Rolf was gone, Number Nip closed up the opening in the wall, took on Rolf's shape, with clothes like Rolf's clothes, put himself into the chains which Rolf had shaken off, and lay down on the floor of the cell as if he was dead. Early in the morning the gaoler came into the cell with a crust of bread and a jug of water to give the prisoner his last breakfast ; but to his great surprise he found him lying dead on the floor in his chains. He raised him up and shook him, but there was no sign of life. He went and told the Bailiff, and the Bailiff told the Mayor and the other great men of the city. They were all disappointed that a thief should escape punish-

ment in that way ; but as they found that he was really dead, they ordered the body to be given over to the doctors of the Gymnasium to be dissected, so that that part of the sentence at least should be carried out.

But what had been poor Meta's thoughts and feelings all this time ? It was about noon of the day on which Rolf had been condemned that she first heard the terrible news. Some one called at the house and told her aunt, and her aunt told her. She was thunderstruck. She could not at first believe that the story was true ; but when Ludwig, who had gone to find out whether or not it was really Rolf who had been condemned, came back and told her that there was no doubt about it, she fainted, and could scarcely be revived again. She was put to bed, and lay all the afternoon like one in a nightmare dream ; but during the night she fell asleep, and a gentle smile came over her face. Ludwig, who had been with her all the time, then left her alone and went to his own room. He had not been long gone, when a tap, tap which awoke her was heard at her window. The window was then opened from the outside, a small piece

of paper was dropped in, and the window was again shut. Although the day had dawned, and it was now light, Meta saw no one. She had had a pleasant dream, so that she awoke with a less troubled mind; and she was now curious to see what the paper was. She took it up and saw that there was writing on it; and as soon as she had read the writing, she threw herself on her knees before her bed, and said very earnestly, "O God! I thank Thee, O God! I thank Thee," and wept for joy. The words which she had read on the writing were these:—"Your lover did not steal the purse, and he is now free. He has gone to visit his father at Bunslau. Go to the top of the Rosenberg on the third day after this with Frau Ursula. Enter the chapel there by the west door, and walk to the front of the altar. There you will meet with the reward which your constancy to your lover deserves."

Let us now see what the Professor had been about. When the Bailiff's messenger came and told him that Rolf was blamed for theft, he never imagined that he had really

been guilty of theft. He just supposed that he had been playing off some of his pranks on some one, and that nothing serious could come of it. As the Professor was busy with his studies all that day, it was only next morning early that he heard to his great surprise and horror that Rolf had been condemned to death, and that he was to suffer that very day. As soon as he heard the terrible news, he hurried away to the Bailiff and begged for mercy to the poor boy.

"Mercy!" said the Bailiff. "You come too late, the prisoner is dead."

"Dead! dead!" repeated the Professor; "why has there been such haste in carrying out so dreadful a punishment?" and he stood as if stunned, unable to say another word.

"He was found dead in his cell," replied the Bailiff; "so that justice has not had her due."

"Died of a broken heart, poor boy, from being falsely blamed, I do not doubt," said the Professor. "Where is his accuser? He must be found, and get the punishment which he deserves, for falsely blaming him."

"His accuser is safe in prison, according

to custom, until it be seen whether or not he blamed the prisoner justly. Follow me, and you shall see him."

The Bailiff and the Professor then went to the prison, and when they entered the room into which the accuser, who you know was the grave-looking person, had been locked, they saw something which made them both stare with wonder. The grave-looking person was gone, but his empty clothes were there, all sitting up together on a chair, busy writing at a table! The writing, however, was soon done. The arm of the coat laid down the pen, and the clothes fell in a confused bundle on the floor. The Professor and the Bailiff went forward to the table, and looked at the paper on which the clothes had been writing, and they read on it the words, "Good-bye, from Number Nip."

The two stared at each other in silence for a few seconds. "So the accuser of the poor boy has been Number Nip," the Professor then said. "It has all come of his imitating Number Nip's pranks; but the Mountain Spirit has been harder upon the

232 ROLF AND THE PROFESSOR.

lad than I have been, although he played off his worst prank on me. I wished him punished, but I never wished him dead."

"Poor lad, he did not deserve death after all, so we must save his body from the dissectors," the Bailiff replied.

The two then left the prison for the Gymnasium, and they ordered the body to be put into a coffin and taken to the Professor's house, where it was to remain until the funeral day. It was late in the day before this could be done, and every one had gone to bed except the Professor, and all was silent in his house. The Professor sat down in his library to write to Rolf's father, telling him the sad news of his son's death, and of the preparations which he was making for the funeral. While he was writing the letter he heard a slight noise in the next room, where the body of Rolf had been laid out in its coffin. The noise was as of some one moving. Then the Professor heard the door of the room open. Then he both heard and saw the door of the library slowly open; and as it opened his wax candle burned low and showed only a small flickering blue flame.

Then a tall white figure walked in, which was so thin and airy that the Professor could see his book-case and his books on the opposite side of the room right through it ; and except for its whiteness and airy thinness it was the exact picture of Rolf.

"I was foolish ; but you have had your revenge on me," said the figure in a deep hollow voice. "You could have saved me from being unjustly condemned, and you did not. Are you satisfied with having so punished me ?"

The Professor could only stare and tremble—unable to move or speak.

"I see you *are* satisfied," the figure again said in the same hollow voice. "Now for *my* revenge."

The Professor then sank on his knees before the figure, partly because his legs gave way under him, and partly because he wished to ask forgiveness of the terrible figure. He clasped his hands together and looked towards the figure with a face of misery and, as if wishing to say something which he could not say.

"You ask forgiveness, and I grant it you on one condition."

"On what condition?" asked the Professor, in a voice which was so shaky and so low as scarcely to be heard.

"You must marry old Frau Ursula," replied the figure.

"Yes, willingly, as you order it," said the Professor in the same low and shaky voice.

"And you must marry her to-morrow," said the figure.

"Yes, whenever you like," replied the Professor.

"You must at once give up all claim to any part of her niece Meta's money, and you must make Frau Ursula do that too."

"I will," answered the Professor.

"You must go to the top of the Rosenberg on the third day after this, and take your wife and Meta with you. You must bring with you a paper signed by your wife and yourself, saying that you will seek no part of Meta's money; and you must be before the altar in the chapel on the Rosenberg at twelve o'clock noon precisely. Obey in everything, or you will see me again in a more terrible form."

"I will obey in everything," answered the Professor.

The figure then melted away from the Professor's sight, and the wax candle burned up again as brightly as before.

The Professor did not leave his chair until the dawn was shining in upon him. He then rose and went to the next room to see whether everything was right with the body of the lad ; and to his great amazement he found it was gone. The coffin was there and the shroud, but no body was to be seen. That was a mystery of which he could make nothing ; so he thought it best just to leave it alone and ask no questions at any one about the missing body. He did not even go to tell the Bailiff what had happened.

The one thing which was uppermost in the Professor's mind now was to obey all the commands of the awful figure which had appeared to him during the night ; and, as soon as he had got breakfast, he dressed in his best morning suit and hastened to Frau Ursula's house. He told her he had come to ask her to marry him ; and to his great surprise she consented at once, and they were

married next day. He told her what the figure had said to him about Meta's money, and the Frau agreed to sign the paper along with him ; and so they both signed it.

When the third day came, Rolf and his father and mother left Bunslau to go to the Rosenberg; but why they were to go there none of them knew. On the same morning early, the Professor and his wife and Meta left Hirschberg to go to the Rosenberg, the Professor carrying the signed paper with him. At two minutes before noon Rolf and his father and mother had reached the east door of the chapel on the Rosenberg; and precisely at two minutes before noon the Professor and his wife and Meta had reached the west door of the chapel. Precisely at twelve o'clock Rolf, with his father and mother following, reached the front of the altar, over which he saw in letters of gold the words, "Pass not, part not!" At the same moment Meta, with the Professor and his wife following, reached the same spot, and saw the same words in golden letters above the altar. When Rolf and Meta met, they looked in silent amazement for a moment, and then, with

tears of joy, fell into each other's arms. The parson who had married the Professor and Frau Ursula followed them to the Rosenberg, because some little bird, probably sent by Number Nip, had whispered to him that he would be wanted there; and, entering the chapel, he reached the altar, where the two lovers were still locked in each other's arms. The parson made a sign to Rolf's father and mother, and to the Professor and his wife, to come forward, and, stretching out his fatherly hands over the lovers, he said in a clear voice which echoed all through the chapel, "Whom God hath joined, let not man put asunder."

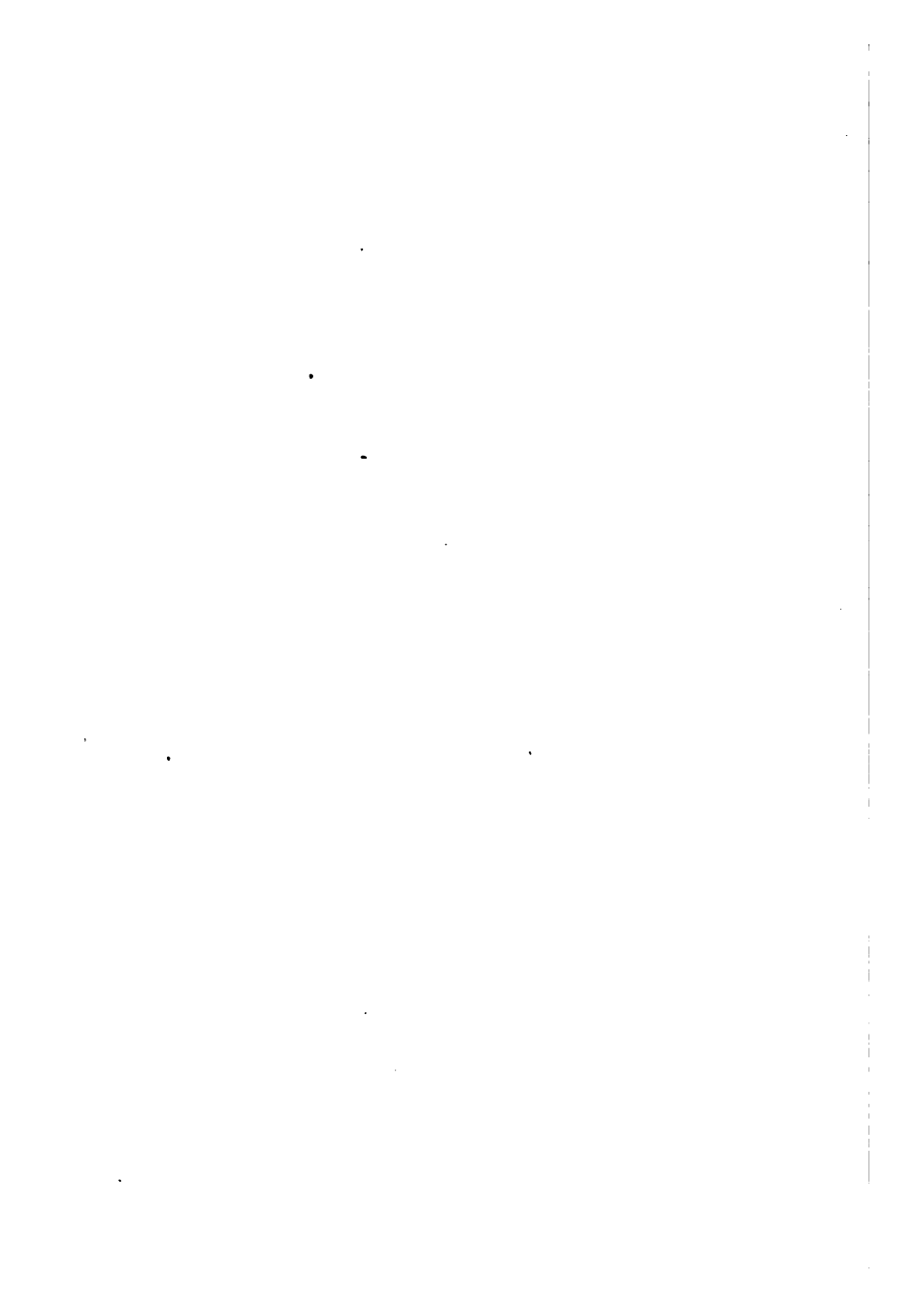
The lovers having been so unexpectedly married after so wonderful a meeting, were in a transport of joy. The Professor handed the written paper about Meta's money to Rolf; and when he told Rolf what it was, Rolf thanked him and his wife for their goodness, but said, that as he had now got Meta herself, it would make no difference to him whether he got her money or not. Meta, hearing what he said, proposed that they should share the money with her uncle and aunt. Rolf at once agreed to the proposal, and so that

was done. The uncle and aunt were much gratified with the goodness of the young people, and as they were not rich, they thankfully accepted the kind and generous offer.

The whole party then drove back to Hirschberg, and they all ate the wedding supper together with much joy in The Golden Cross.

When Rolf paid his bill to the landlord in the little office next day, he told him how sorry he was for the wild pranks which he had played when he was last in The Golden Cross. The landlord and the landlady both heartily forgave him; and they, with all their servants, joined in a loud ringing cheer for the happy bridegroom and his happy bride as they drove away for their home at Bunslau. The bridegroom and the bride reached their home safely; and there I believe they lived very happily all their days, although the old writer of my story has forgotten to tell us that.

THE END.



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